

Agurs Prayer.

O R,

THE CHRISTIANS
CHOYCE, for the outward E-
state and Condition of this
present LIFE.

Describing
The miserie of Pouertie, the
vanitie of wealth, the excellen-
cie of a middle Estate, and
the way to true
Contentation.

By *George webbe*, Batchelor in Di-
uinity, and Preacher of Gods Word,
at *Steeple-Ashton*, in
Wiltshire.

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Churchyard. 1621.

SI

W

wil



TO
THE VVOR-
SHIPFULL MY
MVCH HONORED

Cousins, Mr. *Alexander*
CHOCK, Esquire, and
Mrs *Bridget* CHOCK,
his Wife; happinesse heere,
and blessednesse
hereafter.

Worthy Cousins,



HE common
Quære in this
world, is, Who
wil shew vs any good?

Psal. 4. 6.

A2 Euery

Webbe, G.

25155

The Epistle

*Aristot. Eth.
lib. I. c. I.*

*Gen. 49.
15.*

*Num. 22.
37.*

Act. 19. 25.

*Habac. 2.
13.*

Euery one affecting a kinde of Good; few discerning, and fewer seeking that which is indeed the only true Good. Some hunt after Issachars Good, ease and pleasure: Some after Balaaks Good, promotion and honour: Some after Demetrius his Good; goods, in stead of Good. It is a world to see, how both in Court and Countrie, Church and Commonweale, men toyle for the world,

Dedicatorie.

world, and tire out themselves for very vanities; which as they are not worth the seeking, so they are not sure to be found of them that seeke after them, the most part of such seekers, being always at a losse, as may appear by those often heard complaints; one, for what hee hath lost; another, for what hee hath not found; a third, for that hee is not satisfied; a thousand for that they

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The Epistle

Gen. 8. 9.

Pro. 30. 8.

are deceived. Whiles others launch into this Euripus of carking cares and inconstant desires, wherein their soules, like Noahs Dove, finde no rest, I haue made choise of Agur his Harbor, a retired priuacie: which, sure I am, doth yeeld me more tranquillitie, than the Sea of him, doth him that would be stiled Monarch of the Catholique Church. In this Harbor, I meete with three
incompa-

Dedicatorie.

*incomparable commodi-
ties, Prayer, an Armour
of prooffe against all ex-
tremities ; Content-
ment, a medicine for all
miseries ; A Middle E-
state, to be preferred be-
fore all superfluties: The
sweetnesse whereof, as I
haue had a taste of in my
priuate meditations ; so
haue I beene both desi-
rous and desired to make
it more publique, by pub-
lishing my meditations
vpon the same. Apo-*

Eph. 6. 18.

2. Cor. 6:
10.

Iob. 12. 2.

The Epistle

Apologie for which my doing, I goe not about to frame, hauing already aduentured so often on the Presse: I presse none to read it; if any may reape any good by it, it is at their seruice; if any deeme it a needlesse labour, they may spare the labour of reading it; if any carpe, either at the matter, or at the method of it, let them amend it. To you (my deare and worthy Cousins) I dedicate

Dedicatorie.

cate it, partly because I may make more bold with you than with many others, in regard of that affinity, which, by Marriage, I haue with your familie, and partly for a testimonie of my thankfulnessse for many fauors receiued from you, and of that obseruance which I owe vnto you. I am not vnacquainted with your well imployment of the time, in reading Bookes which tend to piety: in

A 5

which

The Epistle

Luk. 21. 3.

which kinde, albeit you
are stored with varie-
tie, yet giue mee leaue
to adde this poore Mite
vnto your Treasurie.
It is a Treatise, as dedi-
cated to your names; so
not unfit for your vse:
you are now both in the
prime of your yeares, but
in the expectance of your
chiefe outward estate,
the place where you now
liue, the companie with
whom you conuerse, the
occurrents daily before
your

Dedicatorie.

your eyes, may draw you to admiration of greatnesse, and affectation of superfluities : Heere you shall behold the vanitie of worldly glory, the danger of prosperitie, and the sweetnesse of a retired priuacie. Here you shall finde the way both to bee content with what you haue, and how to demean your selues towards that which you doe expect.

This Contentment,
with

The Epistle

1. Tim. 6. 6

with Godlinesse, is the
greatest gaine, and
best improuement of a
Christian, which will
then stand by vs, when
all the Honours of the
world end in basenesse,
all the pleasures of the
world, in bitternesse;
all the wealth of the
world, in emptinesse; all
the delicates of the world,
in loathsomnesse; and all
the glory of the world, in
rottenesse. I shall not
need, with many words, to
stirre

2. Pet. 3. 1.

Dedicatorie.

stirre up your godly
minde to embrace this;
who, besides those noble
endowments which your
selues haue in your
selues, haue the exam-
ples of your worthy Pre-
decessors to admonish you:
the one of you in a decea-
sed Vncle of blessed me-
morie, whose name you
beare, and whose heyre
you are: The other in
a liuing Father, whose
life may bee a light vn-
to you.

Alexander
Chock, of
Avington,
in Berkshire
deceased.

S^r. Anthony
Hungerford,
of Stock, in
Wiltshire.

Goe

The Epistle

Goe on, yee hopesfull
branches of those wor-
thy Stocks; Adorne
your Houses with Grace,
Wisedome, and a god-
ly Conuersation: The
Lord make your House
as the House of Pha-
rez, of the seede which
God, in his good time,
shall giue vnto you, for
the continuance of your
posteritie: The Lord
make you fruitfull, like
Rachel and Lea, which
two did build the House
of

Ruth. 4. 12
II.

Dedicatorie.

*of Israel ; and graunt
that yee may doe wor-
thily in Ephrata,
and be famous in
Bethleem.*

(:::)

Steeple-Ashton De-
cemb. 8. 1620.

A poore Kinsman, and
true obseruer of you
and your House:

GEORGE WEBBE.

THE

A book of
the old
and new

George W. West

THE



THE CON-
TENTS OF THIS
TREATISE.

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Reference. Fourthly, the A-
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bounded*

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AGURS

I

AGVRS Prayer:
OR
The Christians Choice.

PRO. 30. 7,8,9.

7. Two things haue I required of thee,
deny me not them before I die.
 8. Remoue farre from mee vanitie and
Lies; Giue me neither Pouertie nor
Riches; Feed me with food conueni-
ent for me;
 9. Lest I be full, and denye thee, and
say, Who is the Lord? Or, lest I bee
poore, and steale, and take the name
of my God in vaine.
-

CHAP. I.

*First, the Author. Secondly, the
Matter. Thirdly, the Refe-
rence. Fourthly, the Analysis
of the Text.*



These words are a
Prayer, and this
Prayer was made by

B

a

The Author of these words.

1. *Greg. Dial. lib. 4. c. 4.*

Iac. de Valent.

Pref. in Cant.

^a *Pro. 1. 1.*

^b *Pro. 3. 1. 1.*

2. *Verba congregantis filii uomantis.*

Hieron.

Quod prius congregauit ab alijs, sive a spiritu sancto, postea enomuit, & cruciavit.

Lorin. Proleg. in Eccl.

3. *Augustin: Ludovic. Vives. Tremel. & Ianius.*

a Prophet, and this Prophets name was *Agur*: But, who this *Agur* was, it is much controverted among Interpreters. Some, by *Agur*, doe vnderstand none other but *Salomon* himselfe, vnder whose name this Booke of a *Proverbs* is entituled, and whose name in the same is ^b sometimes varied. And to this end, the vulgar Translation readeth it not as a proper name, but by way of *Periphrasis*, The words of a gatherer, the sonne of a deliuerer. But that reading is reiected by the more iudicious; because the Characters there vsed, doe intimate a proper name: And that opinion is evidently confuted, by the Inscription it selfe, by the Preface, or Introduction, and by the circumstances

stances of this very Prayer,
which now wee haue in hand.
First, by the Inscription; for
there wee finde this *Agur* to
be the sonne of *Iaketh*; where-
as *Dauid*, not *Iaketh*, was Fa-
ther vnto *Salomon*. Secondly,
by the Preface or Introducti-
on; for the Author of these
words ^d in the very entrance
of the words speaketh thus of
himselfe: *Surely, I am more
brutish then any man, I haue not
the understanding of a man, &c.*
Whereas it is recorded of *Sal-
omon*, that ^e for wisdom
vnd understanding, there was
none like him before him, neither
after him should any be like vnto
him, 1. King. 3. 12. Third-
ly, the circumstances of this
Prayer in the present Text,
doe plainly declare, that *Sal-*

^ePro. 30.1

^dPsal. 2.3.

^e1. Kin. 3.
12.

¶ 1. Kin. 10

23.

¶ Pro. 30.

7, 8, 9.

¶ V. 1.

4. *Compor-
tationes ver-
borum Au-
guris(i.) col-
lectio docu-
mentorum
ex eius ver-
bis.*

Tremel.

5. *Albanas.
in Synops.*

6. *Rodulph.
Bain: in
hunc locū.*

7. Tremel.
& Inn.

mon was not the composer of it; for whereas *Salomon* did abound in wealth and riches, as is testified of him, our Author heere, by the very tenor of his Prayer, doth explane himselfe to ibee a man but of a meane estate; yet hee was a Prophet, for so the Inscription doth intitule him: *The words of Agur, the sonne of Iaketh, euen the Prophesie.* And this Chapter seemeth to haue beene the summe of all his Prophesie; which, for the excellency thereof is inscribed to *Ishiel, euen to Ishiel and Ucal*: which two names are not (as some haue imagined) the names either of some of *Agurs* Auditors, or of some men of note in those dayes, vnto whom hee might dedicate these his Dictates: blessed

But it is a *Periphrasis* of our blessed Saviour *Iesus Christ*, who is the true *Ithiel*, *Mectum Deus fortis*, A strong God with me; and not so onely, but also *Vcal*, *Potens Deus*, A God of power. Both which are heere ingeminated, both to shew the authority by which he spake, an his assurāce to be herd in what he desireth.

But, leauing the Author, we come vnto the matter. And, omitting other matter, contained in this Treatise, the present Discourse is onely intended about *Agurs* Prayer. As we haue seene the deliuerer of these words to bee a strange Author, so wee shall finde the Prayer it selfe to bee a strange kinde of Prayer; strange, whether wee take a view either of

The Matter.

the number of the Petitions therein contained: But two things which he doth require; or, the manner of his praying; hee will admit of no denyall, *Deny mee not before I dye*, or, the matter of his Prayer, A Deprecatiō against that which others most affect, *Remove frō me vanitie and lies*; A Supplication for that wherewith few rest content, *Giue mee neither Poverty nor riches; Feede mee with food conuenient for mee*; or, the reason and ground of this Petition; the danger of Prosperity, wherein most men feare no danger, *Lest I bee full and denye thee, &c.* and the perill of penurie, to many, an occasion of iniquity, *Lest I bee poore and steale, and take the name of my God in vaine.*

A Prayer, short, but sweet, the words few, but full of matter; for, in effect, heere is included the whole summe of that Prayer which is the Mother Prayer, the Patterne for all Prayers, the Lords Prayer. As there is a Preface both directing vs to whom we should pray, to *Our Father*, and also giuing vs confidence in our Prayers, in regard of his willingness to heare vs, being a Father, and his readinesse to helpe vs, because he is in Heauen: Euen so *Agur* doth here preface in the same manner. First, he doth direct his Prayer vnto God, *Two things haue I required of thee*. Secondly, he is confident to be heard in this his Prayer, speaking vnto God as to a Father which can de-

A Reference of this to the Lords Prayer.

i Mat. 6. 9.

nie him nothing, *Denie mee them not before I dye.* And whereas our Sauour in that most perfect Prayer, doth range the Petitions into two rankes; some to concerne the glory of God; some, our own necessities; *Agur doth heere likewise follow the same partition, albeit, ordine retrogrado,* somewhat inuerting the order of the same.

First, hee doth desire the Lord to remoue farre from him *vanitie and lies,* answerable to that Petition, *Lead vs not into temptation, and deliuer vs from euill.* And in desiring to haue these euils remoued from him, hee doth implicite-ly acknowledge that hee had offended in them, and so craueth forgiuenesse of them; which

which is the substance of the next precedent Petition, *Forgive vs our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against vs.* Suitable to the fourth Petition, *Give vs this day our daily bread,* is that which followeth next in the Text, *Give mee neither Pouertie, nor Riches; feede mee with foode conuenient for mee.* The third Petition, *Thy will bee done in earth as it is in Heauen,* is heere implicitly prayed for, by *Agur* his submitting his will vnto Gods will. The second Petition, *Thy Kingdome come,* is, in effect, inferred in these words, *Lest I bee full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?* And what else doth hee pray for, but, *Hallowed be thy name,* (which, in that Prayer, is the

first Petition) when he prayeth against the contrary; that hee may not *steale, nor take the Name of God in vaine.*

The Analysis of the Text.

Not ouer-curiously to prosecute that Analogie, wee may trace the Text in a more plaine and perspicuous path; observing in the words themselves two principall parts.

First, a Preface.

Secondly, a Prayer.

In the Preface two particulars are proposed.

First, the summe, or substance of the Request, *Two things haue I required of thee.*

Secondly, his boldnesse and confidence to bee heard in these requests; *Denie me them not before I dye.*

In the Prayer wee may like-

likewise obserue two particulars.

First, the Petitions.

Secondly, the Reasons.

The Petitions are of two sortes.

First, deprecatory.

Secondly, supplicatory.

The deprecatory part doth include two things.

First, the matter prayed against.

First, *Vanitie.*

Secondly, *Lies.*

Secondly, the thing desired, a remouall of them, *Remove them farre from me.*

The supplicatory Part, is proposed two wayes.

First, negatively.

Secondly, affirmatiuely.

Negatiuely, what hee would not haue, and that in

in two extremes.

First, *not Pouertie.*

Secondly, *nor Riches.*

Affirmatiuely, what hee would haue, and that in a golden meane.

First, the matter, *Food.*

Secondly, the measure, *conuenient for me.*

The Reasons or motiues annexed to the Petitions and alleadged as impelling causes, mouing him to preferre these two Petitions, are of two sorts; drawne from the danger,

First, of Prosperity.

Secondly, of Aduersity.

The danger of Prosperity is heere noted to bee two-fold.

First, Atheisme; *Lest I bee full and denye thee.*

Se-

Secondly, Obstinacie, and
say, Who is the Lord?

The danger of Penurie, is
branded with a twofold Ob-
loquie.

First, of Theft, *Lest I bee
poore and steale.*

Secondly, of Blasphemie,
*and take the name of my God in
vaine.*

These are the particular
branches issuing out of this
roote of sacred Scripture; vp-
on which, this present dis-
course is to inlarge it selfe, be-
ginning first of all with the
first Part, the Preface or In-
troduction: *Two things haue
I required of thee, deny me them
not before I dye.*

CHAP. 2.

First, the subiect of Agurs Prayer. Secondly, the unbounded limits of our prayers. Thirdly, the Conditions required in true Prayer.

Two things haue I required of thee.

1. The
summe of
Agurs
Prayer.

THis Preface before *Agurs* Prayer, doth propose vnto vs (as before was intimated) two particulars.

First, the summe of his request.

Secondly, his confidence to bee heard.

The summe or substance of the Request, is proposed in these words, *Two things haue*

I required of thee : wherein we may take notice of these three particulars.

First, the Subject proposed for the Prayer.

Secondly, the forme or manner of his praying.

Thirdly, the partie, vnto whom the Request is made.

The Subject proposed, *Two things*. The forme or manner how it is proposed, by way of request, *I haue required*. The Partie to whom this request is made, is the Lord; *Two things haue I required of thee.*

A short Request, not curious for the framing; not tedious in proposing; hee commenceth not a multiplicity of suites, hee beggeth not a monopolie of fauors; *Duo tantum*, heere are but two things which

Two things.

k Psal. 27.
4. 8.
Mollus 1-
bid.

2. The vn-
bounded
limits of
our Pray-
ers.
1 Iob. 38.
11.

which hee doth require, *Two things haue I required.* And why but two? had hee no need of any more? or, did he doubt of being heard, if hee should haue desired more? Neither: but, as *Dauid, Ps. 27.* speaketh of himselfe, *One thing haue I desired, which I will still seeke after, &c.* that is, one thing aboue all other things: so *Agur* heere, *Two things I doe require;* not these two, and no more; but especially these two, and at this time these two, as being most expedient for mee, and best sorting with my necessity.

Doubtlesse, God doth not streighten vs in our Prayers, nor set limits to our Petitions, as hee doth bounds vnto the Sea, *Hitherto shalt thou goe and*

no further; but, as himselfe is
 vnbounded in his might and
 in his mercies, so hee leaueth
 vnto vs a large field for our
 Petitions: wee may require
 of him, *Two things*, and two,
 and two, whatsoeuer, and as
 much soeuer as wee stand in
 need of; neither shall we pray
 in vaine, vlesse our Prayers
 themselues bee vaine. Our
 good God proffereth largely,
Dilata os tuum, Open thy
mouth wide, and I will fill it:
 Aske boldly, largely, plenti-
 fully, I will not deny thee.
 Our blessed *Iesus* promiseth
 as freely, *Aske, and yee shall*
haue; seeke, and yee shall finde;
knocke, and it shall bee opened
unto you. Giue but thy Pray-
 er a voyce to aske; (for it must
 not bee tongue-tied) giue it
 an

m 2. Chr.

2. 6.

n Ps, 103.

11.

• Psal. 81.

80.

p Mat. 7. 7.

¶ Jerem.
38. 5.

3. The
conditi-
ons in
true Pray-
er.

an eye to seeke; (for it must not bee carelesse) giue it an hand to knock; (for it must not feare to disquiet and molest.) And then what the King of Israel spake vnadvisedly, the King of Heauen will truly verifie, *The King can denie you nothing.*

But, albeit our Prayers are without the stint of limitation, yet (if wee would pray aright) our Prayers must bee kept within the lists of due discretion. And that they may bee so, wee must looke well vnto,

First, the matter of our Prayers.

Secondly, the manner of our praying.

Thirdly, the Partic to whom our Prayers must bee di-

directed. For all which wee haue a notable patterne or exemplar, in this part of the Preface vnto *Agurs* Prayer.

In the matter of our Prayers, we must looke,

First, to the substance.

Secondly, to the quantitie.

Thirdly, to the qualitie of the same.

To the substance of them, that they bee materiall; to the quantitie, that they bee seasonable; to the qualitie, that they bee lawfull: All which wee may learne heere by *Agur* his example.

For, as concerning the first, The substance of our Prayers: *Agur* giueth vs a notable example, to consider well before wee pray, for what wee are to pray; hee first proposeth what

1. For the matter of our Prayers.

1. Their substance.

D. King.
Leſt. 24. on
Ionah.

* Ps. 45. 1.

what to ſpeake before he ſpeaketh: *Two things* (ſaith hee) *haue I to require*; ſo ſhould our Prayers bee premeditate, that when wee pray, wee may not pray by roate. *True Prayer* (as a Kingly Biſhop of this Land well noteth) is, *Sermo natus in pectore*, a matter bred in the breaſt, not at the tongues end; the heart ſhould firſt endite a good matter, before the tongue vent it, accrding to that of *Dauid*, *My heart is enditing a good matter; my tongue is the Pen of a ready writer*. As the ſtones prouided for the building of the Temple, were firſt framed without, before they were placed in the walles; ſo our Prayers ſhould firſt bee framed in our hearts, before they bee vttered with our mouthes,

mouthes, lest wee disorder all with a confused hammering. The neglect whereof, hath mard many Prayers, of which the Prouerb might truely bee verified, *Satis loquentia, sapientia parum*, words enough, little wisdom: And the want of this deliberate meditation, hath beene the cause why so many come wildly, and vnadvisedly to this sacred exercise, bearing the ayre with emptie words, and seeking their matter vp and downe, as *Saul* did his fathers Asses.

Againe, for the quantity of our Prayers, wee may heere by *Agnr* take example, to haue them pithie and concise: how short? how sweet is this his Prayer? *Two things haue I required: Oratio multa esse debet,* (saith

10. *Salust.*

1. *Sam.*
9.4.

2. Their
quantity.

11. *August.*
ad Prob.

u Eccl. 5. 2.

12. *Comper*
in Ps. 119.

v. 129.

13. *August.*
Epist. 121.

*Habent preces crebras,
& breues
tanquam e-
iaculationes
ne intentio
illa emolef-
cat.*

(saith *Augustine*) *loquutio pauca*; our Prayers should be many, our words few; whose opinion if wee esteeme not so Canonically, we haue the same confirmed by *Salomon* himselfe, *Eccles. 5. 2.* *Bee not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God, for God is in heauen, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words bee few.* God receiueth not our Prayers by tale, but by weight. To continue long in Prayer, and to be feruent in Praying (saith a Writer of our owne) is very difficult. *Saint Augustine* writeth of the Primitive Christians in Egypt, that they had their short, but frequent Prayers; (which hee calleth *eiaculations*, as if they were dart-like,

like, with a sodaine quicknes,
sent forth) lest their intention
and deuotion should relent
with long continuance: And
hee commended the like pra-
ctice vnto vs in the same place;
By Prayer (saith hee) wee are
to deale with God, more by
teares then by talke, by wee-
ping more then by words.
Long Prayers wee discom-
mend not, so long as they haue
other dimensions futable to
their length; neither doe wee
enuie those who are indued
with so ample a giift of Pray-
er, that like those, 1. King. 18.
they can pray from morning
vntill noone; or rather (like
our blessed Saviour) can con-
tinue whole nights in Prayer:
Would God that all the Lords
people had a plentifull giift
heere-

14. *Lacri-
mis potius
quā uerbis,
fletu magis
quam affla-
tu, &c.*

*Longum, la-
tum, presen-
dum.*

* 1. Kings
18. 20.

15. Aug. ad
Quodvult.
heres. 37.

• Mat. 6. 7.

16. Barrow,
Greenwood,
etc.

heerein. Yet I would neither
bee an Euchite, to place the
whole substance of Religion
in the length of Praying; nor
an Ethnicke, to thinke that I
shall bee heard the sooner for
my much speaking. As God
hath giuen to euery one the
gift, so let him vse it, either
for continuance or abbrevia-
tion of his Prayers. Sure I
am, that not length, but sound-
nesse in Prayers sound best in
Gods cares: Yet there are
some who can fancy no Pray-
ers but those which are spunne
out at length; and censure all
shorter Prayers, as short cuts,
and shreddings; vhen not-
withstanding those shreds (as
they disdainfully terme them)
may bee of much more va-
lue then their renter-stretched
broad-

broad clothes, which (as one wittily noteth) doe most commonly shrinke in the wetting. Tedious Prayers, are, for the most part, fraught with many friuolous Tautologies and vaine repetitions, which our Sauour taxeth, as Heathenish; and the very Heathen themselves dislike among themselves.

Lastly, for the qualitie of our Prayers, wee must foresee, that it bee good and lawfull which wee doe desire: so was *Agurs* heere, but *Two things*; yet those things lawfull, honest, necessary. *Yee aske and receiue not*, (saith Saint *James*) *because yee aske amisse*: when wee aske amisse, no wonder though wee misse of what we ask; nay, it is a benefit frō God

C

to

17. D. Bois
Postil. on
Dominus
uobiscum.
b Mat. 6. 8.
18. Terent.
Heautont.
Act. 5. Sc. 1.
Desine Deos
gratulando
obtundere,
nisi illos ex
tuo ingenio
iudicas, ut
nihil credas
intelligere,
nisi idem
dictum cen-
ties.

3. Their
qualitie.
c Iam. 4. 3.

Hof. 7. 14

19. Ph-
sarch Apo-
thegm.

to suffer vs to want what wee wantonly affect. Idle Prayers are meere mockages, and doe prouoke God to wrath against vs. As *Bias*, to a fare of passengers, shaken with an horrible tempest, and crying to their gods for succour, answer'd, not without some earnest in that iest: *Silete, ne vos hac illi nauigare sentiant*; Hold your peace, lest the gods hap to heare you passing by; noting their lewdnesse to bee such, as might rather procure a greater vengeance, then giue them hope of a deliucry. So may I say vnto those, who in their Prayers do make vnlawfull demands, *Hold your peace, let not God heare your Prayers, lest hee grant them to your hurt*: And yet, God cannot choose but

but heare the Prayers made vnto him ; therefore had we need to take good heed to the qualitie of our Prayers, that they bee good Prayers, lest wee should pray against our selues.

Hicherto wee haue seene a patterne for the matter of our Prayers; now, for the manner of our praying: *Agur* likewise doth, in the very Preface of this his Prayer, giue vs a notable example; *Two things haue I required*: But two motions, and yet, marke in what effectuall manner hee doth commence the same: hee doth not bragge, but begge; not demand, but desire; *Peto*, I desire these two things: It is done by way of Request.

Thereby teaching vs true
C 2 humi-

2. For the manner of our Prayers.

I haue required.

Peto.

Webbe, G.

1. Humili-
tie.

¶ Luk. 18.
10, 11, 12,
13.

20. Gregor.
Moral.

¶ Psal. 51.
17.

humilitie in our Prayers; wee cannot claime any thing to our selues, as of right; wee cannot deale by way of exchange, wee must come into Gods Court of Requests, and sue *in forma pauperis*. Two men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharise and the other a Publican; the Pharise boasted, the Publican entreated; the Publican was accepted, the Pharise reiected. Humilitie is both a grace it selfe, and a vessell to comprehend other graces; & this is the nature of it: It winneth by yeelding, and the lower it stoopeth towards the ground, the more aduantage it getteth to obtaine a blessing. *The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; a broken and contrit heart*

heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

If wee looke further into the words, we shall finde not a *Peto* onely, but a *Postulo*; not a bare desiring, but a requiring; (*I require*) which is more then a single request, and doth lesson vs true feruencie in our Prayer: *The Prayer of the Righteous* (saith Saint James) *preuaileth much, if it be feruent.* Would wee haue our Prayers to bee preualent? wee must then looke carefully therevnto that they bee feruent. Perfunctory and cold Prayers perish in the vsing; *The Lord* is weere to all that call vpon him; what, to euery kinde of call? No; but to them that call vpon him faithfully; not to euery formall calling on him.

2. Feruencie.

Postulo.

5 Iam. 5.
10.

^h Psal.

C 2

Our

21. *Gregor.*
ut supra.

Our Prayers (saith Gregorie) are many times not heard, not for want of sound and outward crying, but for want of inward desires; the voyce of our Spirit is soft and submisse, it dyeth in the Ayre, before it ascendeth up into the presence of God; and shall wee thinke that God will heare such Prayers? O no; we must bow the knees of our hearts, as well as of our flesh, and beat, not onely the Ayre with our words, but the very Heavens with our importunities: wee must require, as wel as desire; or else our Prayers may returne emptie into our bosome.

3. *Frequencie.*

Yet, marke we further, and wee shall finde as well a frequencie, as well as feruencie in this Prayer of Agur; hee
ma-

maketh not this request once, but many times; hee saith not *Peto*, or *Postulo*, but *Postulau*, not, I doe now, but, *I haue required*; noting thereby the continuance of this his Prayer: wee must bee frequent as well as feruent in our Prayers. Our Sauour telleth vs, that *wee ought to pray alwayes, and not to faint in praying*. And the Apostle willeth vs to bee *instant in Prayer*; and againe, *to pray without ceasing*; and againe, *to watch in Prayer*: we haue so much weakenesse, we haue so many wants, that when wee haue prayed, wee haue need to pray againe; hee neuer prayeth well that doth not often pray.

But what will it profit vs to bee either frequent or fer-

Postulau.

i Luk. 18.

i.

k Rom. 12

12.

i 1. Thes. 5

17.

m 1. Pet.

4.7.

3. For the
partie to
bee pray-
ed vnto.

ment in our Prayers, if our Prayers bee not sent to their proper place? Therefore in the next place wee are to take notice of the right object of our Prayers, to whom wee are to pray; which likewise followeth in the Text: *Two things haue I required of thee.* Of whom? of thee, *Itbiel*, euen of thee, who art *Itbiel* and *Ucal*, of thee, who art God Almighty; of thee, who art neere to heare, and powerfull to grant; for thither the words must haue relation, as may appeare by the reference in the Title.

Of thee.

To God
onely.

ⁿlam. i. 17

To God alone then we are to direct our Prayers; at his hands alone wee are to require what wee doe desire: *Euery good and perfect gift is from*

from above; let vs not seeke it lower. And indeed, (to vse the words of the Apostle Peter vpon the like occasion) *Lord, whither shall wee goe? what, to the Saints? Abraham is ignorant of vs, and Israel doth not know vs. To the Angels? They are but our fellow-servants: they haue no such Office as to bee our Mediators. To the blessed Virgin Mother? Wee acknowledge her, ευλογημεν εν παντι, blessed among woemen, as the Scripture doth testifie of her; but wee may not adore her: Faith and Prayer meete together, and kisse each other; How shall they call on him in whom they haue not beleeued? Wee beleeuue not in the Virgin Mary, nor in Angels, nor*

C 5

in

o Ioh. 6.
68.

p Esa. 63.
16.

9 Reu. 22.

9.
1. Tim. 2.

5.
1. Luk. 1.
28.

22. The
Kings con-
fession. Ar-
tic. 7.

1. Rem. 10.
14.

in the Saints deceased; and therefore wee may not inuocate them in our Prayers. Sure wee are that the Lord hath expressely enioyned vs, *to come vnto him, to call vpon him*; Search wee the Booke of God throughout, wee shall neuer finde where hee gaue vs charge to goe to others, or to call vpon others.

^u Mat. II.
28.
^x Psal. 50.
15.

Prayers to
Angels &
Saints cō-
futed.

23. *Bellarmin.*
cap. 19. l. 1.
de sanct. be-
at. Rhem.
1. Tim. 2.
Vers. 4.
^a Ier. 2. 13.
^b Vers. 18.

Let Papists prate of Porters, Mediators, Masters of Requests, and other such like Intercessors, to whom they betake themselves in their Prayers; what doe they, but (like the Idolatrous Iewes) forsake the fountaine of lining waters, and hew forth to themselves Cisternes, euen broken Cisternes, which can hold no water? What haue wee to doe in

in the way of Egypt, or to tread the path of *Ashur*? that wee, like vnto the Heathens, should haue recourse vnto such tutelary Patrons? *Whom haue wee in Heauen but the Lord? and who is there on earth that wee may desire in comparison of him?* his eares are open to the Prayers of the Poore, his eye-lids trye the sonnes of men; hee needeth no Informers nor Intelligencers, who himselfe is present in all places, knoweth euery ones hart; neither can any thought bee hidden from him. What though wee are vnworthy to pray vnto God; yet his goodnesse will beare with our vnworthinesse: hee biddeth vs call vpon him, well may wee come, for wee shall bee welcome;

^c Psal. 73.
25.

^d Psal. 94.
9.

^e Psal. 139.
1.

^f 1. King. 8.
39.

^g Iob 42.
4.

^h Luk. II.
5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

24. Petrus
Rauen.

come; hee is that friendly
Houfholder, at whose dores
when wee knocke euen in the
deadeft houre of the night,
when his children are afleepe,
and the cares of Saints and
Angels shut, firft, and at the
firft call, nay, onely of all the
reft, maketh answer vnto vs:
O quam dare vult! (faith one)
O how willing is hee to grant,
who is fo willing to be difquiet-
ted! How glad is hee to heare
thy knocke, who hath placed his
bed fo neere thy gate! O quam
non ad ianuam tantum, fed &
ipfa ianua Dominus fuit! How
truely may wee fay, hee was not
rnely neere the gate, but the ve-
ry gate: This made Agur to
fue vnto him. And this gaue
him that boldneffe and con-
fidence to bee heard in his
fuit;

suit; which now followeth to
bee considered in the next
place.

CHAP. 3.

*First, Agur his boldnesse in pray-
ing. Secondly, the confidence
of the faithfull in their pray-
ers. Thirdly, the reason why
God doth sometimes delay,
sometimes deny their requests.
Fourthly, the necessity of day-
ly Prayer.*

*Denie me them not be-
fore I die.*

IN this latter branch of the
Preface of *Agurs* Prayer,
wee may behold,

First,

1. Agurs
boldnesse.

First, the boldnes and confidence of his Prayer: he will haue no nay: *Deny me not.*

Secondly, the constancy or continuance of his praying, or the terme how long hee would haue that continued, for which hee doth pray, *vsq; ad mortem*, euen vntill his death, *Denie me them not before I dye.*

Deny mee not; how bold, how confident, how importunate is *Agur* in this suit? hee will haue no nay, hee admitterh no delay: *Deny me not.*

2. The confidence of the faithfull in their Prayers.

ⁱ Heb. 4. 16

Such boldnesse and confidence haue all the faithfull in their Prayers: They may *come boldly to the Throne of grace, to obtaine mercy, and to finde grace in time of need; Hæc est fiducia: This is the confidence that*

that wee haue in him, if we aske any thing according to his will, hee heareth vs: And, if wee know that hee heareth vs, whatsoeuer wee aske, wee know that wee haue the Petitions wee desire of him. 1. Ioh. 5. 14, 15 What assurance haue we of this?

First, his faithfull promise, who is *yea, and Amen*; who cannot dye, who cannot lye; hee hath promised, nay, hee hath sworne, that hee will not faile his children, that *Hee will fulfill the desires of them that feare him*; that, *Hee will also heare their crye and helpe them*.

Our blessed Sauour confirmeth the same with a solemne protestation, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoeuer yee aske the Father in my name, hee will giue it unto you.*

Se-

^k Ioh. 5. 14

15.

^l 2. Cor.

10.

^m Rom. 11

29.

ⁿ Psal. 85.

25.

^o Psal. 145.

19.

^p Ioh. 16.

23.

1 2. Cor.

5.5.

1 Rom. 8.

15.

25. Bern. in
fect. Pentec-
cost. serm. I.
*Quod po-
stulamus ip-
se dat ut po-
stulemus.
Nunquam
oranti be-
neficia de-
negabit, o-
rantes ut ne
deficiant qui
instigauit.*

Secondly, we haue earnest
already giuen vnto vs, to as-
sure vs; Hee hath sealed vs,
and giuen the earnest of his Spi-
rit into our hearts; for we haue
not receiued the Spirit of bon-
dage to feare againe; but wee
haue receiued the Spirit of A-
doption, whereby we crye Abba,
Father. It is the Spirit (saith
Bernard) that moueth vs to
pray: therefore wee may bee sure
to be heard in our Prayers; see-
ing our Prayers are not our
owne, but the motions of Gods
Spirit in vs. And againe, That
for which wee pray, bee giueth
vnto vs, who giueth vs this grace
to pray. And againe, Hee will
neuer deny his benefits vnto vs
when wee pray, who prouoketh
vs for to pray.

Thirdly, the nature and
pro-

property of Faith will confirm vs in this assurance, this *Faith being the ground and confidence of things not seene.* Faith obtaineth euery good thing that it craueth; for, if wee can beleene, all things are possible: And therefore, Saint James willeth vs to aske in *Faith, and not to doubt*: And our blessed Saviour checketh vnbeliefe; *O thou of little Faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*

O what a singular comfort & encouragement may hence arise vnto the Children of God, seeing they may bee so bold with God in their Prayers, and are so sure to be heard in their requests? *I am but dust and ashes* (saith Abraham;) and yet, *I haue taken*

^f Heb. 11.
1.

^t Mark. 9.
23.

^u Iam. 1. 6

^x Mar. 14
31.

Comfort
to the
faithfull
encoura-
ging them
to Prayer.

^a Gen. 18.
27.

ken vpon mee to speake vnto the Lord; wee are poore, yile, miserable wretches, below the lowest degree of basenesse by reason of our sinnes, yet the great God of Heauen and Earth doth giue vs leaue to speake vnto him, to call vpon him; yea, to importune him. In the *Persian* Court, it was death for any to come within the inner Court, vnlesse the King held forth his golden Rod to call him in: but the Scepter of the Lord our God, not that iron Scepter of his Iustice; but the golden Scepter of his grace, is euer held forth to Man, Woman, Childe, Bond, Free, Stranger, and Denizon, they may safely approach, not onely to the outward or inward Court, but

^b Hest. 4.
II.

but euen to the Presence-Chamber, yea, to the Throne it selfe, where the King himselfe sitteth, and whatsoever they craue of him shall bee granted vnto them. Among men, wee may pay and pray, wait and worke, and make the best friends wee can, and yet many times faile of our requests; with God there is no such failing, no delay: But, as *Salomon* encouraged his Mother *Bathsheba*, when shee came to commence a suite vnto him. *Aske on, my Mother; for I will not say thee nay: so doth the Lord embolden vs when we pray vnto him, Aske on, my children, aske on; for I will not say you nay, I will deny you nothing.*

Yet God doth sometimes
delay

6 1. King.
2.20.

3. The reason why God doth sometime delay or deny the requests of his children.

d Mat. 15.

25.

e 2. Cor.

12.8.

delay, sometimes deny the requests which are made vnto him. The *Cananitish* woman prayeth earnestly, yet is put off, not without great discouragement; *Paul*, an Apostle, prayeth thrice, that is, many times, and yet obtaineth not what hee prayed for : many times wee pray, and yet haue not our Prayers granted.

The causes why our Prayers haue not present audience, are some, in our selues, and in the manner of our praying; some, in the matters of our Prayers; some, in the Lord, who denyeth vs audience.

First, sometimes our owne indisposition to receiue, causeth the delay of the

the blessing. It may bee
wee are not humbled suf-
ficiently, vnder the con-
science of our owne infir-
mities and vnworthinesse;
And perhaps the coldnesse of
our affections is the impedi-
ment.

Secondly, it may bee that
the things wee haue prayed
for are not good, or if good,
yet not expedient for vs;
things, it may bee, which God
hath not absolutely promised:
And perhaps hee foreseeth
that they would bee hurtfull
vnto vs. Wittily speaketh
Bernard to this purpose;
God, like a discrete father,
if his childe desire bread, will
giue it to him; but, if hee de-
sire a knife, will keepe it from
him.

Third-

26. Bern. de
Quadrage-
sim. 5.
Paulo pa-
tenti panem
libenter por-
rigit petenti
cultellum,
non consen-
tit.

Thirdly, perhaps the Lord would heereby preuent and curbe our pride, lest we should grow proud, being fatted with the multitude of the performances of our Petitions; or else, that heereby he might try our patience, or exercise our faith, or to set the greater price vpon his blessings, or to make vs the more thankfull for them when wee doe enioy them.

Fourthly, the Lord seemeth sometimes to deny our requests, when indeed hee doth not denie them; for many times hee dealeth by way of exchange or commutation; Denyeth he Wealth? hee giueth Content; denyeth hee Peace? hee giueth Patience; denieth he Temporall things? hee

he giueth Spiritual things; *Bonus Dominus qui nō tribuit sēpe quod volumus, ut quod malimus attribuat*; A good God (saith *Augustine*) who often giueth not vnto vs what we would haue; that he might giue vnto vs what is better for vs to haue. Wee (saith *Bernard*) know not to pray as wee ought; but God is mercifull to our ignorance, and graciously receiuing our Prayers, doth deny vnto vs what is either not so profitable for vs, or not fit so soone to be granted vnto vs; yet Prayer shall neuer be without effect.

Wee are not then to bee daunted or discouraged, if presently wee obtaine not our requests; but if our request bee seasonable, to bee so much the more earnest. The woman
of

27. Aug. Epist. 34.

28. Bernard. sup. Nos quid oramus scilicet oportet nescimus, sed miseretur ille, &c. quod nobis aut omnino non est vile, aut non tam cito dari minime tribuit. Oratio tamen infructuosa non erit.

f Mat. 15.
25.

5 Mar. 10.
48.

h Psal. 119.

i 2. King. 4.
30.

29. August.
de verbis
Domini.
Non impor-
tunus, nec
impudens es.

of Canaan before mentioned, is not discouraged, though the Disciples were her back-friends, and shee was put off with many delayes. The blind man checked for his clamorousnelle, cryeth with more instance. *Dauids* eies faile with waiting, yet hee reneweth his deuotion: Euen so should we bee instant and earnest with God, albeit presently wee obtaine not what wee haue prayed for. As the *Shunamitish* woman did importune *Elisba*, *As the Lord liueth, and as my soule liueth, I will not leaue thee*: Euen so should wee bee importunate with God in our Prayer; nay, *It is no importunity or impudencie* (saith *Augustine*) to be earnest with God; for it is a thing well pleasing un-

to God. Thus did *Jacob* wrestle with God, and would not let him goe without a blessing. So doth *Moses*, after a sort, force God, insomuch, that he claimeth dismissal, *Let mee alone*, *Exod. 32. 10.* *Domine, quis tenet te?* (saith one) *Lord, who holds thee?* Surely *Moses* his instance and importunity. While wee liue, wee may not leaue; but as *Dauid* said, *One thing I haue desired, which I will still seeke after*: So, to resolute still to goe on in our suit, vntill we haue our Request; and, with *Agur* heere, to continue: praying, so long as life shal continue, saying, *Deny me not, &c.*

And indeed, vntill we dye, wee shall euer haue need to pray; our liues being neuer free frō want of good things,

D

and

^k Gen. 32. 6.

^l Exod. 32. 10.

30. August. *ibid.*

^m Psal. 27. 4.

ⁿ Pro. 30. 7.

4. The daily necessity of praying, so long as we liue.

31. Symach.

o Job 14. 1.

p Reu. 14.
13.

9 Gen. 8. 9

and feares or feelings of evils. Heere fraile Nature is the Field wherein wee are euer toiling; Sinne is the Iebusite, which is euer troubling; the World, a Step-mother, alwaies chiding: *ὁ βίος ἐστὶν ἀλλὰ σύμφορος*, *This life is not a life, but a common calamitie.*

Man that is borne of a Woman, hath but a short time to live, but full of miserie. O, who can recount the vanities, the miseries, the necessities of this life present! *Blessed are the dead which dye in the Lord; they rest from their labours.* The Saints neuer haue rest, vntill life endeth; like Noah his Doue, which could finde no resting place, vntill Noah opened the window of his Arke, to receiue her in againe. After this life

life ended, there will bee no more cause of Prayers; in stead of them, we shall chaunt forth Praises: In the meane while, vntill we dye and rest from our labours, wee may not cease nor rest from our Prayers.

O then, let vs arme our selues with this Armour of prooffe; let vs frequently and feruently vse this holy exercise. There is no day, houre, or minute of life, that hath not necessary vse of Prayer. O, what an excellent thing is Praier! It is the hand of a Christian, which is able to reach from Earth to Heauen, & take forth euery maner of good guift out of the Lords treasure: It is one of the Keyes of the house of *Dauid*, whereby

The excellencie of Prayer.

^r Mat. 7. 7.

[Reu. 3. 8.]

[Ioh. 14. 1]

[Luk. 10. 4]

[2. Ki. 2. 9.]

[Philip. 3. 20.]

we open the dores of the heauenly Palace, and goe in, to take a view of that eternall glorious Mansion prepared for vs in the Heauens: It is the Messenger, that with speed goeth from our soules, saluting no creature by the way, and poasteth straight to the Mercie-seate in Heauen, reporting to the Lord all our desires, and returning backe a fauourable answer from him: Yes, it is to vs as the fiery Chariot of *Elish*, whereby wee mount vp, and haue our conuersation with God, in the Heauens Happy are they, vnto whom this heauenly Exercise is familiar; vnhappy they, who are strangers vnto the same.

CHAP. 4.

First, the Petitions. Secondly, their harmony. Thirdly, their precedencie. Fourthly, the summe or substance of the deprecatory part.

*Remoue farre from mee
vanitie and Lies:
Giue mee, &c.*

VEE come now from the Preface, to the Prayer it selfe; wherein (as the former generall *Analysis* was proposed) wee will take notice,

First, of the Petitions.

Secondly, of the Reasons.

And in the Petitions: First,

D 3

wee

1. The Petitions.

wee will begin with the deprecatory Part, which is first proposed; wherein our Prophet doth desire a remouall of some euill; *Remoue farre from me vanitie and Lies.* Before we come to consider of the particulars, whereof, the order and method of these Petitions is well worth our obseruation; whether we doe consider their harmonie, or their precedencie.

2. Their
Harmony.

The right
temper of
our Prayers.

And first, for the Harmonie of these Petitions, we may behold a well-tuned Prayer, consisting of a well-composed medley; *Giue, and forgine; Remoue, and grant; Remoue farre from mee, &c. Giue vnto mee, &c.*

As euery one needeth somewhat, for which hee ought to pray;

pray; so, there is none, but
hath something to pray against.
In the Lords Prayer (the
Prince and patterne of Pray-
ers) there is a *Libera nos*, as a
Da nobis; a *Deliver vs from e-
uill*, as well as a *Giue vnto vs*.
Nehemiahs mixture heerein
must bee our method: *Remem-
ber me, O Lord, concerning this,*
and pardon mee, according to thy
great mercy: Remember and
pardon, Pardon and remember;
these two must be the ballan-
ces of our Prayer. There must
be a remouall of euill from vs,
as well as giuing good things
vnto vs; or else, *va nobis*, woe
bee vnto vs. *Woe to the most*
laudable life of Man (saith lear-
ned Augustine) *if it be exami-*
ned in strictnesse of iustice. If
thou, Lord, (saith David)
D 4 shouldst

^a Mat. 6. 11

12.

^b Nehem.

13. 22.

^{31.} August.
in Psal. 100.

^c Psal. 130.

3.

^d Gen. 18.

20.

^e Esa. 18^f Act. 8. 23.^g Psal. 19.

12, 13.

^h Esa. 59. 2.

shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord who should stand? Suppose, we be not conscious to our selues of grosse and notorious finnes, that wee haue neither the crying finnes of the Sodomites, nor the crimson finnes of the Israelites, nor the bitter finnes of Simon Magus; yet alas, how many are the infirmities of our soules! how many the deformities of our liues! how many our secret! how many our open finnes! All which must bee removed from vs; or else, woe vnto vs. Again, what will it stead vs to haue euils removed, if wee haue not good things granted? Cease from euill, and doe good. It is not sufficient to bee cleansed from the one; but wee must also bee furnished with the other;

ther; or else, with *Belshazzar*,
wee shall be found too light.

i Dan. 5.
27.

Therefore *Agur* maketh this
mixture of his Prayer; a De-
precation against euill, and a
Supplication for good: And
the like, when wee come to
pray vnto the Lord, should
bee the tenour of our Peti-
tions.

And, as these two sorts of
Petitions doe yeeld an excel-
lent Harmony; so, they doe
notably instruct vs in their na-
turall Precedency. First, *Re-
mone*; then, *Giue*. First, wee
must haue our sinnes remo-
ued, before wee can looke for
any blessing to bee bestowed:
for, *Sinnes doe separate between
God and vs*; and, our vessels
vntill they bee emptyed of
their filthinesse, are neither fit

3. Their
preceden-
cie.

* Esa. 59.2

I Psal. 51.

1, 2, 3, 4.

m Vers. 11.

12.

for, nor capable of any good-
 nettle. Our Persons, before
 our Prayers, must be accep-
 ted; and, how can that bee, vn-
 lesse our staines and corrupti-
 ons bee remoued? Therefore
David, in his most penitenti-
 all Psalme, doth cry, *Miserere*,
 before *Concede*: First, *Haue*
mercy vpon me, wash mee, purge
me, &c. Then, *Make mee to*
heare ioy and gladnesse: First,
Remitte: Then, *Renoue*: First,
According to the multitude of
thy mercies, blot out my trans-
gressions: Then, *Restore to me*
the ioy of thy saluation. Euen
 so must wee (like *Agur* heere
 in the Text) First, sue in the
 Court of Requests for a par-
 don; before we come into the
 Lords Exchequer for a re-
 ward.

From

From the order, or method of the Petitions, come wee now to the Petitions themselves. And first, to begin with the Deprecatory Part, which is first proposed; wee haue in it to obserue:

First, the Object prayed against, *vanitie and Lies*.

Secondly, the Act required, *a removing of them*.

Thirdly, the extent, how farre: long remoue: *Remove them farre from mee*.

And first, for the Object to bee remoued, *vanitie and Lies*: we may consider them; First, in a more generall, Secondly, in their more strict signification. In a more generall signification, these two words *Vanitie and Lies*, doe con-

4. The summe or substance of the Deprecatory Part.

1. The object prayed against.

ⁿ 1. Sam.
12.21.

• Rom. 3.4
32. *Parcens*
in Rom. 3.

• Psal. 4.2.

• Ionah 2.
8.

33. *Aulus*
Gell. noct.
Attic. lib. 18

64.

containe in them, the substance of all sorts of sinnes; for, all sinne is called *Vanitie*, 1. Sam. 12.21. *Yee goe after vaine things, which cannot profit nor deliuer; for, they are vaine.* And the name of a Lie is attributed to all impiety, Rom. 3.4. *Every man is a Lye*, that is, *Every man is a Sinner*. The Psalmist giueth both these names in the Abstract, vnto sinne, Psal. 4.2. *How long will yee loue vanitie, and seeke after leasing!* And the Prophet *Ionah* ioyneth them together in the Concrete, calling them, not only *Lies & Vanities*, but, *lying vanities*. *Vanitie and Lies are nonyma*; words, signifying one and the same thing; euery Vanitie is a Lie, and euery Lie is Vanity. How fitly doe both

both these names accord with sinne ! for, what doe all the vanities of the world, but feed vs with Lies ? promising pleasure, but leauing smart; promising profit, but euer tending to, and ending in our hurt ? Of the seuerall sorts of Vanities, and of the nature and danger of Lies, wee shall take more notice in the Chapters following.

In the meane space, wee may, by the way, take notice of the neer adherence of both these vnto vs, whiles wee liue heere in this valley of mortallitie ; and that from the Act heere intimated, *Remove them from mee.* Agur, in desiring to haue these two remoued from him, doth acknowledge how close they stucke vnto him.

2. The act
prayed
for.

^rRom. 3. 4.¹Pf. 39. 5.^rPf. 62. 9.

him. Euery man, who is the sonne of man, hath a tang and tainture within him of vanitie & lying: *Euery man is a Lyer;* so saith the Apostle, *Rom. 3. 4.* *Euery man is vaine;* so saith the Psalmist, *Pfal. 39. 5.* *Verily, verily, euery man in his best estate, is altogether vanitie;* which he doth elsewhere confirme by particular Induction; saying, *Surely, men of low degree are Vanitie, and men of high degree are a Lie; to bee laid in the balance, they are lighter then vanitie it selfe.* There is in euery one of vs the seed of all sinne; wee are, by nature, Atheists, Idolaters, Lyers, Blasphemers, Adulterers, Murtherers, Thieues, and what not? if not by actual transgression; yet by habituall disposition: If these

cor-

corruptions breake not forth into act, it is more of Gods mercy, then of our might.

As Vanities and Lies doe cleave thus fast by nature vnto vs; so, wee are vtterly vnable of our selues, to remoue them frō our selues: And therefore *Agur* prayeth vnto the Lord to remoue them from him; *Remoue thou from me, &c.*

The way of man is not in himselfe; *It is not in man* (saith *Ieremie*) *to direct his steps.* These lying Vanities, like a burre, stick fast vnto vs; they compass vs round about, as the Iuie doth the Oake: It must bee the worke of God to remoue them from vs, whose alone it is, to worke in vs both the will and the deed. Excellent to this purpose is the meditation

^u Ier. 10.

23.

^x Heb. 12.

1.

^y Philip. 2.

13.

Webbe, G.

34. *August. soliloqu. c. 15*
Si quando
steti, per te
steti: sed
quando ceci-
di, per me
ceci di, &
semper in
luto iacui-
sem, nisi tu
me erexisses;
semper ce-
cus fuisssem,
nisi tu me il-
luminasses;
quando ceci-
di, nunquam
surrexisssem,
nisi tu mihi
manum por-
rexisses.

35. *Idem in*
Enchirid. 1.

31.

Totum Deo
debetur, qui
hominis vo-

dition of Saint *Augustine*: If
 at any time I haue stood, it
 is by thee, Lord, that I haue
 stood; but, when I haue fallen,
 I haue fallen by my selfe: And
 againe, I had alwayes lien in the
 dirt, vlesse thou, Lord, hadst
 pulled mee out; I had alwayes
 beene blinde, vlesse thou hadst
 enlightened mee; when I was
 fallen, I could neuer haue risen
 againe, vlesse thou hadst holpen
 mee. The whole worke here-
 of, then, must bee giuen to
 God; the whole glory must be
 ascribed vnto him, who both
 prepareth the will of man, that
 it may bee fit to bee holpen
 by grace, and also aideth it, be-
 ing prepared.

What then? Are we to rest
 secure and negligent all this
 while; because it is God alone
 who

who can remoue these euils from vs? O no; But we must both strue and pray against the same. *Watch and pray* (saith our blessed Sauour) *that yee enter not into temptation*: wee must watch ouer our senses, that they be not inticed; and wee must pray against our euils, to haue them remoued; and that, not for a while, but continually; not to haue them separated from vs for a small distance; but to haue them remoued farre off, as *Agur* heere, *Remoue them farre from mee.*

As in the bodily infections; so, in the contagions of the soule, wee must obserue that rule of Phisicke, *cito, longe, tarde*; we must haste to auoid them; wee must goe farre enough

luntatem & preparat adinuandam, & adiunat preparatam.
Mat. 26. 4

3. The extent.

^b Pro. 4.
14, 15.

^c 1. Thes. 5
22.

^d Leuit. 19.
11.

^e Psal. 1. 1.
^f Psal. 26.
4.

nough from them; wee must not, in any wise, retorne back againe vnto them. It is the counsell of Salomon the Wise, *Goe not into the way of euill men, auoid it, passe not by, turne from it.* And it is a Caueat giuen by the Apostle; that *wee should abstaine from the very appearance of euill.* It is not enough for vs not to bee Lyers; but, wee must keepe our selues, *a verbo mendacii*, from a lying word: It is not sufficient not to bee vaine; but, wee must auoid the very shew of Vanitie. Therefore, *Wee must not haunt vaine places; nor keepe company with vaine persons.* As the Mariner is carefull to auoid all the rocks and sands, which might bee occasion of Ship-
wrack;

wrack; so should wee with like care and diligence, auoid all occasions of sinne. To this end wee should examine our selues, to what sinnes wee are most addicted; and what haue been the occasions whereby wee haue beene prouoked to the committing thereof: and when wee haue found them out, wee must shunne them, as we would doe a Serpent. To giue instance in some particulars; If a man hath beene giuen to carnall lusts and fleshly desires; hee must follow the practice of *Iob, who made a covenant with his eyes, that hee would not looke vpon a Maide.* If a man bee prone to affect toyes, and wanton gestures; hee must pray to God, (as *Dauid* did)

to

8 Iob. 31.
12.

- ^h Psal. 119. 37. *to turne away his eyes from beholding vanitie. If a man bee inclined to Drunkenness; he must follow the aduice of Solomon, not to looke vpon the Wine when it is red, and when it sheweth his colour in the cup. If a man bee vsually ouer-shot with swearing, or any other abuse of the Tongue; with*
- ^k Ps. 39. 1. *David, hee must take heed to his wayes, and keepe his mouth bridled; hee must desire of*
- ^l Ps. 141. 3. *God to set a watch before his mouth, and to keepe the dore of his lippes. Aboue all things, wee must be carefull to keepe*
- ^m Pro. 4. 23. *our hearts with all diligence; because they are so prone and so easie to bee drawne vnto sinne; according to the admonition of the Apostle:*
- ⁿ Heb. 3. 12. *Take heede, brethren, lest there bee*

bee at any time in any of you,
an euill and unbeleening heart,
to depart away from the living
God. Blessed (saith Salomon)
is the man that feareth al-
way: But, hee that harden-
eth his heart, shall fall into
euill.

• Pro. 18.
14

CHAP. 5.

*First, the variety of vanities. Se-
condly, the madnesse of our
times, vpon the same. Third-
ly, a Caneat therevpon.*

HAuing spoken of Vani-
tie in generall: it now
remaineth that wee inquire
more particularly, into the va-
rietic of Vanities; whereof,
in the world, wee shall be sure
to

i. Varietic
of vani-
ties.

P Eccles. i.
2.

to finde a world. *Vanitie of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanitie of vanities, all is vanitie.* Noting thereby, such a transcendencie of vanities in the world, that hee did want words to expresse them. If *Salomon* stood so much amazed at vanitie, in his time; what would hee now say, if he did liue in these our dayes, and see how much it is increased and multiplied, more then euer it was in the age wherein hee liued? Vanitie was then but a twigge; now, it is growne into a great Tree, sprouting out with large spreading boughes and branches; there being not on-ly so many vanities as there be things in the world; but also many vanities euen in euery thing.

thing. Vanity in youth, vanity in age, vanity in men, vanity in women, vanity in wit, vanity in wealth, vanity in our food, vanity in our apparell, vanity in our affections, vanity in our actions: All is Vanity.

Surely, (saith the Psalmist) every man, in his best estate, is altogether vanitie. Look wee vpon our prime time and youthfull dayes; how many vancies doe attend the same! Folly, Wantonnesse, Lusts, Pleasures, Pride, Ryot, Excesse; and, in a manner, all other sinnes, wherevnto the rashnesse of Nature, or rage of concupiscence may giue fuell, are the vanities of Youth: In which respect, *Chrysostome* compareth Youth to the surging

In Youth.
9 Ps. 39. 5.

26. Chrysost.
serm. cum
esset Presbi-
ter designa-
tus.

Webbe, G.

Ps. 25. 7.

Jer. 31. 19

Eccles. 11
10.

In more
mature
Age.

37. August.
de Catech.
rud. c. 16.

ging Sea, full of rough windes
and rugged waues. Hence
it is that *David* prayeth a-
gainst the sinnes of his Youth;
and *Jeremie* professeth himself
ashamed, yea, euen confoun-
ded, because hee did beare the
sinne of his Youth; And *Salomon*
setteth this downe as an
axiome vndenyable; that,
*Childhood and Youth are Va-
nitie.*

The vanities of elder Age
are increased with our age;
vnruly passions and affecti-
ons, though peradventure not
rash and violent, as in Youth;
yet more permanent and pre-
dominant: Cares and Feares,
Ambition, Dissimulation, Pol-
licie and Treachery, accompa-
nie a more mature age: Sullen-
nesse, Subtilty, and Couetous-
nesse,

ture, euill, and therefore to bee avoided: And Saint Augustine, No Lies are iust, for all Lies are sinnes: And Gregory, Every Lie is iniquity, for so much it dissenteth from equity, as it departeth from verity.

51. August.
ad consent.

52. Gregor.
moral. 18. 2.

Lastly, to all Liers, without exception, the doome is denounced, *Reuel. 21. 8.* All Liers shall haue their part in the Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. And *Reuel. 22. 15.* exclusion out of the Kingdome of Heauen is threatned to whosoever loneth and maketh a Lie.

^b *Reu. 21. 8.*

^c *Reu. 22. 15.*

That wee may take yet a little farther view heereof; let vs seuerally consider of these two sorts of Lies in question; the merry Lie, and the officious Lie.

F

And

And first, for the merry Lie; wee doe not vnder this name vnderstand euery thing which in shew of words is vntrue; for, then wee should condemne all *Hyperbole's*, *Parables*, and *Ironies*, whercof notwithstanding, wee see a frequent vse in the Scriptures; neither euery thing that seemeth false in vttering, but yet, by the gesture or pronounciation of the speaker, it may appeare, that something else, which is true, is signified by him.

And such a iest, as vnder shew of an vntruth doth hide a truth, cannot bee condemned as vnlawfull. But, that which properly, and in the meaning of the speaker is a Lie, though it bee spoken in iest

iest and merriment, is not warrantable.

First, because it is not only false, but also vaine and idle: and, if of idle words accompt must bee giuen; how much more of Lies?

d Mat. 12.
36.

Secondly, the Prophet *Hosea* inueigheth against those, who, with their Lies make Princes merry: Now, if Princes, to whom, as being oppressed with many cares, mirth is most needfull, may not be made merry with Lies; who then may?

e Hos. 7.3.

Thirdly, a Lie may not be vttered to helpe a man, much lesse to delight him; for, (as Schoolemen say,) *Bonum utile presertur delectabili*; A profitable good is to bee preferred before a delightfull; nay, *The*

53. Thom. 2.
2. quest. 110.

54. *August.
de mend. ad
Consens.*

55. *Aemil.
Prol.*

truth it selfe is not to bee spoken to delight men, (as *Augustine* saith) much lesse a Lie. And therefore, *Epaminondas* the Heathen man shall rise vp in iudgement against those, who make no conscience of speaking merry Lies; for hee was so strict an obseruer of the truth, that he could not abide that a Lie should bee spoken, no, not in iest.

But the chiefe controuersie is, concerning the officious Lie; for, therein now a dayes, the policy of worldly men especially consisteth: And, let vs see by what Arguments they commend this office of Lying.

Obiect. I.

First, because it is not against Christian Charitie, say they, to helpe our brother with

with a Lie. Yea, but Christian Charity (wee say) abhorreth lying, and reioyceth in the truth: and, those which are true Christians, can doe nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

Secondly, the honest friendship of the Heathen, was contained within the limits of truth. The Philosopher, in his Morals, professeth it to bee a better thing to prefer truth before friends: And, they who were of the better sort among them, were wont to professe themselves friends one to another *μάλιστα βωμών* vnto the Altars, to which they vsually came, when they were to testifie the truth; that it may be a shame for Christian men, in respect of friendship,

Solu.

1. Cor. 1.
6.

2. Cor. 13
8.

56. Arist.

Ethic.

ὅστις ἐστὶ καὶ
τῷ φίλῳ
ἀρετῶν
πλεονέκτης
ἢ ἑαυτοῦ.

ship, to goe beyond the truth.

^h Rom. 3. 8

Thirdly, Christian Charity requireth not only that we should doe good; but also, that wee should doe it well and by good meanes; for, it is a Rule in Diuinity, that *Evill is not to bee done, that good may come thereof.*

ⁱ Ps. 5. 6.

Fourthly, Christian Charity, that for another mans commodity wee should cast away our selues: but, *God will destroy those who speake Lies; and, howsoever these Lies seeme officious to our neighbour, yet they proue pernicious to the speaker.*

Obiect. 2.

^k Gen. 12.
16. & 20.
12.

Secondly, they proue this kinde of lying to bee lawfull, by the examples, first, of *Abraham*, the father of the faithfull;

full; who, to escape danger, made a Lie concerning *Sarah*; saying that she was his Sister. Of the Midwiues in Egypt, who, to preserue the Hebrew male-children aliue, told an vntruth. And, of *Rahab*, who is commended in the Scriptures, because she receiued the Spies, and sent them away, and by a Lie saued their liues.

1 Exod. i.
17, 19.

m Iosh. 2. 4

To which wee answere, that such Examples as are doubtfull, Charity bindeth vs to interprete in the better part.

Solu.

And first, to that Example of *Abraham*, in pretending *Sarah* to bee his Sister; hee himselfe shall answer for vs, *Gen. 20. 12.* *In very truth shee is my Sister, the Daughter of my Father, though not of my*

F 4

Mo-

Webbe, G.

57. Aug. ut
supra.

Mother, and shee also is my Wife. Abraham therefore vttered no vnttruth, but onely concealed a part of the truth. Hee did not say, (saith Augustine) Shee is not my Wife; but hee said, Shee is my Sister; hee therefore concealed some part of the truth, but he deliuered no vnttruth; when he concealed, She was his Wife, hee professed, She was his Sister.

Againe, to the Example of the Midwiues, there is no such necessity that we should grant, that they did lie; for, it is probable, that diuers of the Hebrew women, hauing notice of the Kings Ediſt, did not send for the Midwiues, but were, without their helpe, (being strengthened by God, and perhaps, with the helpe of

of other women.) deliuered. But suppose, they had told a Lie; yet wee must distinguish betwixt their Lie, and the preservation of the Infants; for, the preservation of the children was a worke of mercy, and so approued of God; but, their Lie, a worke of infirmity, and not to bee imitated: neither did they tell a Lie (if they lied) to saue the Infants; but, hauing before preserved the Infants, they told a Lie for their owne safety: They are commended for sauing the Infants, not for their lying.

The like wee may answere to that of *Rahab*; there is no necessity that wee should interpret her answer as a Lye; for, it may bee that others had

F 5

lodged

58 *Gregor. mor. 18. c. 2. Parcendo conata sunt Infantium vitam tege- re, mentien- do suam.*

59. *Trenet. & Iunius notes ibid.*

60. *August.*
Benignitas
mentis, non
iniquitas
mentientis.

lodged with her, being an Inne-keeper; of whom shee made that answere, God so disposing by his providence, that shee might truly giue notice of some of her guests, which were gone, and might, in faith and charity, conceale others. But if shee had lied, yet, her Lie is not commended, wherevnto shee fell by infirmitie; but that her worke of faith and charity; neither was her lying rewarded, but her good will.

To all these, and other examples produced to the same purpose, wee may answere with Saint *Augustine*, in the same place:

First, when as Examples of lying are alleadged, out of the holy Scriptures; either they

they are no Lies, but are supposed so to bee; or, if they be Lies, they are not to bee imitated, because they cannot be iustified.

Secondly, the rule of our Conscience is not to be drawn from the Examples of men; but from the Commandments of God: They were men, and therefore they might fall: but these slips of theirs were, in their godly life, as blemishes in a beautifull face, which wee are to behold, as evidences of humane frailty; that wee may bee more wary, not to imitate them as examples.

Wherefore it highly concerneth every good Christian to make a conscience of his word, and to abstaine from
eue-

4. A Caue-
at against
Lying.

ⁿ Psa. 15. 2
• Zeph. 3.
13.

P Pro. 13.
5.
9 Reu. 14.
4.
1 Leuit. 19.
11.
1 Coloss. 3.
2.

1 Pro. 12.
22.

euery kinde of lying. It is a proper note & Character of a Citizen of Heauen, to *speake the truth from his heart*. The remnant of Israel (that is, the true members of the Church which shall remaine) *shall not speake Lies; neither shall a deceitfull Tongue bee in their mouth*, Zeph. 3. 13. And Pro. 13. 5. *A righteous man hateth lying words*. And it is said of those, 144000. that stood with the Lambe vpon mount Sion, that *in their mouth there was found no guile*. Therefore both the Law and the Gospell expressly prohibit lying. This is a sinne that will make vs odious in the sight of God; for, *lying lippes are abomination to the Lord*: It will pull downe the wrath of God vpon body and

and soule; for, *Hee that speaketh Lies, shall not escape: God will destroy them that speake leasings; or, if they doe escape in this world, yet, the Lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, is prepared for them that speake and loue lies.* Well therefore might *Agur* reckon vp Lies as a vanitie of vanities. And wee, with *Agur*, should euermore desire to haue this, as well as any other vanitie, to be removed from vs; and carefully take heed that it bee not found in vs. Thus much concerning the first part of the Petitions in *Agurs* Prayer; namely, the Deprecatory Part: *Remoue from me Vanitie and Lies.*

^u Pro. 19.

5.

^x Ps. 5.6.

^z Reu. 22.

15.

CHAP. 7.

First, the Text opened. Secondly, Poverty described. Thirdly, the reason why Agur doth pray against Poverty. Fourthly, a Correlarie of Poverty.

Giue mee neither Povertie, nor Riches.

1. The
Text opened.

AFTER the Deprecatory Part, (which hath already beene explained) now followeth the Supplicatory Part; wherein, the thing desired is intimated.

This (as formerly hath beene obserued) is proposed two wayes.

First, Negatiuely.

Se-

Secondly, Affirmatiuely.

Negatiuely, excepting against two extremes, Pouerty and Riches; *Giue me neither Pouerty, nor Riches.*

Affirmatiuely, preferring the golden meane, a competency for his maintenance; *Feed mee with foode conuenient for mee.*

First, wee will take notice of the negatiue part, *Giue mee neither Pouertie nor Riches.*

These are the two dangerous rockes, the *Scylla* and *Charybdis*, which *Agur* desireth to shunne, whiles hee is sailing in the troublesome Sea of this world; on the left hand, Pouerty; on the right hand, Prosperity. Of both which in order: And first, of the former, his Prayer against Pouerty;
Giue

*Giue mee not Pouertie.*2. Pouerty
described.

Where first, that wee may the better conceiue of the matter here prayed against, which is Pouertie; it is meete that wee take notice what Pouerty is, both in the *quid*, and the *quale*; in the essence, and in the quality of it.

1. What it
is.

Pouerty, may bee thus described; It is a want or indigence of things necessarie. That Pouerty doth consist in want, or indigence; both the Etymologie of the word, and the vsuall, both Scripture, and vulgar Phrase doe import; where Pouertie and want are *Synonima*, words of one and the same signification. Now, albeit Pouertie consisteth in want; yet, euery want is not Pouertie. *All men* (saith the

Senec. Epi.
108.*Desunt multa omnibus,
omnia multis.*

the Philosopher) want many things ; some men want all things. There is want in wealth; yea, many times greater want there, then where wealth is wanting. A covetous man (saith Hierome) as well wanteth what hee hath, as what hee hath not; for, whatsoever others haue, they want, because they haue it not in their owne possession; and they want also that which themselves possesse, because they haue it not in vse. A man may want much of that which others haue, and yet, not bee poore; hee may haue that which others want, and yet not bee rich. Excellently Seneca: That is not Poverty, which, though it want much, yet desireth little; Hee is poore, that de-

Hieron. proleg. in Bibl.
Avaro dicitur tam quod habet, quam quod non habet.

Senec. Ep. 14.

Idem. Ep. 16
Si ad natu-
ram viues,
nunquam e-
ris pauper;
sed opinio-
nem, nun-
quam diues.
Exiguum
natura desi-
derat, opinio
immensum.
Plutarc. de
cupid. diuit.
Chrysost. de
Lazar. conc.
 2.

The kinds
 thereof.

^a Mat. 5.3.

^b Luk. 6.

20.

desireth much, not hee that hath little. And, to the same purpose, hee alleadgeth a witty saying of Epicurus: If thou liuest according to Nature, thou shalt neuer bee poore; If according to Opinion, thou shalt neuer bee rich. In regard whereof, both Philosophers and Diuines haue confined Pouerty, rather to the penury in the minde, then to the absence of Riches; and, reckon Pouerty to consist, not in hauing little; but, in not hauing that which is enough.

Wee will not heere insist vpon, nor list the seuerall sorts of Pouerty: There is a spirituall Pouerty, and there is an earthly Pouerty; a Pouerty towards God, and a Pouerty towards the World. The
 for.

former sort, namely, spirituall Pouerty is of two sorts.

First, consisting in the want of spirituall Riches, as, the grace of God, and fauour of Christ: So, the Prophet *Jeremie* termeth the irreligious Iewes, *Ier. 5.4.* Surely, they are poore, they are foolish; for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the iudgement of their God. And heereof our Sauiour taxeth the *Laodicean Church*, *Reuel. 3.17.* Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and haue need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poore, and blinde, and naked.

A second sort of spirituall Pouerty is that, which consisteth not in a totall emptinesse of these spirituall graces; but in

^c *Ier. 5.4*

^d *Reuel. 3.17.*

Esai. 66. 2.

*Mr. Perkins in his
Exposition
of Christs
Sermon on
the Mount.
pag. 90.*

in an humble acknowledgement and lamenting at the same, according as the Prophet *Esay* doth interpret it, *Esay 66. 2. To him will I looke, with him will I dwell, that is poore, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my wordes.* But, of this Pouerty wee are not heere to speake; the Text aymeth onely at a temporall or bodily Pouerty, which, in our vsuall phrase, is taken for the want of outward meanes: And this kinde of Pouerty hath two degrees.

First, common want, when a man hath wherewithall to maintaine life; but in great scarcitie and penurie.

Secondly, extreme want, when a man, without reliefe from others, cannot possibly sustaine

sustaine his life. Against both these degrees of Pouerty; but especially, against the latter, doth *Agur* here pray; *Give me not Pouerty.*

Having seene the nature of Pouerty; let vs take a view of the quality of it. Wherein, if wee looke into the originall of it, we shall finde sinne to have been the prime cause thereof; for, before sinne, there was no Pouertie, no want, no indigencie: But when man by transgression fell from God, then hee lost all his former wealth, and Pouerty was laid vpon him as a curse. Thus, originally, Pouerty is a fruit of sinne, and a punishment for sinne: But now, in Christ, to the Regenerate, the curse is taken away, and Pouerty it selfe,

3. The
qualitie
of it.
Original-
ly.

f Gen.3.8.
9.

Acciden-
tally.

2. Cor.
8.9.

*Ambros. in
Luk. 17.*

3. Why *Agur* doth
pray a-
gainst Po-
uerty.

selfe, sanctified to the faith-
full, by him, *who* (as the Apo-
stle speaketh) *being rich, for
our sakes, became poore, that we,
through his pouerty might bee
rich.* So that now, consider
wee Pouertie, in it selfe, it is a
thing indifferent, neither ab-
solutely good, nor absolutely
euill: it maketh vs neither the
better, nor the worse; it is,
as it is vsed, to some a bene-
fite, to others, a curse. To the
which purpose, excellent is
that saying of Saint *Ambrose*;
*There is neither holynesse in Po-
uerty, nor fault in Riches; but as
Luxuriousnesse infameth & dis-
crediteth Wealth; so, holinesse
commendeth Pouerty; of them-
selues, both Pouerty and Riches
are things indifferent.*

Why then doth *Agur* here
pray

pray against Pouertie? Is not Pouerty of the Lord? *Hee maketh poore, and hee maketh rich, 1. Sam. 2. 7.* Hath not God himselfe foretold in the Law, and Christ confirmed in the Gospell, that *there shall bee ever some poore on the earth?* Is there not a blessing promised to the poore? Are they not called Gods Poore? And doth not Saint James tell vs, that *God hath made choyce of the World to bee heyres of his Kingdome?* Why then doth Agur so much dislike it, and pray against it? I answer:

First, there is a twofold Pouerty, (as before hath beene deliuered) the one spirituall, the other carnall: The blessing is pronounced, not to the poore in Purse; but to the poore

^h 1. Sam. 2.

7.

ⁱ Deut. 15.

II.

^k Mat. 26.

II.

^l Mat. 5. 3.

^m Psal. 72.

2.

ⁿ 1. Sam. 2. 5.

poore in Spirit: *Agur* prayeth not against this spirituall Pouerty; but, against bodily want.

Secondly, hee doth not directly pray against this, but optatiuely; neither absolutely, but with condition and resignation of his wil vnto the will of God.

Thirdly, hee prayeth not so much against Pouertie it selfe, as against the dangerous effects thereof, as by the close of this his Prayer euidently it may appeare.

4. A Cor-
relary vp-
on the
premises.

This then is our Conclufion out of the same; Pouerty is neither to be affected nor to be despised. It is not to be affected; because

First, we haue no warrāt out of the word of God, so to doe,

Se-

2. The word of God is so far from inioyning wilfull Pover-ty vnto vs; that on the contra-ry, it commandeth vs to la-bour and to take paines in our lawfull Callings, that we may haue sufficient, not onely to relieue our owne wants, but also to relieue the necessities of others.

Thirdly, *Agur* doth heere pray against it.

Fourthly, it is both a fruite and a cause of sinne, as hath already beene declared, and shall bee more fully amplified in the last branch of the Text.

Therefore there is no reason why wee should affect it. A-gain, wee are not to despise Pouerty in others, nor to bee too much deiected at it, if we finde it in our selues.

G

First.

o Eph. 4.

28.

P 2. Thes. 3

8.

9 Pro. 30.

8.

Webbe, G.

^r 1. Sam. 2.
7.

First, because it commeth
of the Lord, *He maketh poore,
and he maketh rich.*

^r Eccles. 9.
1.

Secondly, it is no euidence
of Gods displeasure; *No man
knoweth lone or hatred by any
thing that is before him, Ec. 9. 1.*

^r Rom. 8.
28.

3. *All things worke together
for the best to them that lone
God, Rom. 8. 28.*

^u Luk. 9.
58.

Fourthly, Christ Iesus our
blessed Sauour, whiles he was
heere in the flesh, was poore;
not hauing where to lay his
head, *Luk. 9. 58.*

^u 1am. 2. 5.

Fifthly, *God hath made
choyce of the poore of this world,
to bee heyres of his Kingdome,
1am. 2. 5.*

CHA.

CHAP. 8.

First, the vow of voluntary Poverty examined. Secondly, the obiections answered. Thirdly, the practice of it censured.

THE Sword of Gods Word hath a double edge; the one, to pierce into the soule and conscience; the other, to conuince the opposite, and to repell imaginations which may arise against the same. Wee haue vsed the one edge already, to the right diuiding of the word of truth contained in this Text. Wee are now to vse the other, to conuince the aduersary, which doth oppose himselfe against the truth. Wee haue heard

1. The
vow of
voluntary
Pouerty.
^a Heb. 4.
12.
^b 2. Cor. 10
4.
^c 2. Tim. 2.
15.

Agur praying against Pouer-
ty; and haue seene how vn-
warrantable a course it is for
any to affect Pouertie. Now
let vs enter into conflict with
the Patrones of Pouerty, who
take vpon them to perswade
men to affect Pouerty, as a
principall point of Piety, and
extoll the practice heereof a-
boue the skyes: for, thus doe
the Champions of the Church
of Rome stand might and
maine for the defence of their
vow of wilfull Pouerty, and
for the supporting of those
new vpstart orders of begging
Friers, Monkes, Heremites,
Anchorites, Capuchins and
such like, whose profession it
is, to vndertake a poore and
needy life, vpon opinion of
greater merit, and hope there-
by

by the better to please God :
which kinde of beggery, our
Romish Baalamites doe high-
ly magnifie, and in a maner,
deifie, accounting that Pro-
fession the most perfect estate
of Christianity, and equalling
those Votaries to the Sera-
phins; yea, if it were possible,
to bee a degree aboue the An-
gels. Let vs see vpon what
ground or warrant they vn-
dertake the same; and what
reasons be which they produce

They obiekt first, that our
Saviour and his Apostle call
Riches, *The Mammen of ini-
quity; Thornes, which choake
the good seede of the Word; and
snares, to intangle and drowne
vs in perdition.*

To which, I answer; that
our Saviour in calling them

G 3

so,

*Bellarmin. de
Menach. c.
7. & 39.
Rhemist. an-
not. in Mat.
19. s. 9.*

2. The Ob-
iections
answer'd.
Obiect. 1.
d Luk. 16
9.
c Mat. 13.
22.
f 1. Tim. 6.
9.
Solu.

Webbe, G.

31. Tim. 6.

17.

h Psa. 112.

1.

i Gen. 13.

2.

Gregor. mo-
val. lib. 9. c.

28.

*Crimen non
est in rebus,
sed in usu a-
gentis.*

Ecclesiast.

13. 25.

Plato in Ti-
maeo.

so, aymeth not at Riches as they are in their owne nature; for so they are the gifts & blessings of God; nor as they are possessed and vsed of the faithfull vnto good purposes: but are abused by wicked worldlings vnto sinne, either by their vnlawfull getting of them, or as in their possession they are puffed vp with Pride or trust in them more then in God, or as they abuse them to wicked ends. *The fault (saith Gregory) is not in the things themselues but in them that vse them: for, (as the sonne of Syrach saith) Riches are good to him that hath no sin in his conscience; and Pouerty is euill in the mouth of the vngodly. And the Heathen man could say, that howsoeuer Riches are blind,*

if?

*if they haue not the eye of reason
to illuminate them; yet they see a-
cutely whē they follow wisdomē.*

Secondly, they obiekt the
Precept of our Sauour to the
Young-man in the Gospell;
*Math. 19. 21. If thou wilt bee
perfect, go sell that thou hast, and
giue it to the poore, and thou
shalt haue treasure in Heauen,
and come and follow mee.* See,
say they, how acceptable a ser-
uice vnto God this is, for a
man to giue all that hee hath
to the poore, and to addict
himselfe to voluntary Pouer-
ty; seeing Christ himselfe pre-
scribeth it, and commendeth it
by his own example. To this
I answer:

First, this was not a Precept
giuen generally to all, but
in particular to this one man.

Obiect. 2.

^k Mat. 19.
21.

Solut.

Secondly, it was giuen vn-
to him as an especiall triall, to
discouer his Hypocrisie and
vaine confidence that hee had
in himselfe; for, whereas this
young Iusticiary had boasted
of his perfection, that hee had
observed and kept the whole
Law of God; our Saviour, by
this tryall, would manifest vn-
to him how farre short hee
came of that perfection, in that
he had not profited thus farre,
as to preferre God in his loue
before his Riches; but would
rather leaue Christ then leaue
them, if hee must needs for-
sake one of both.

Thirdly, our Saviour by
this iniunction would make
him see his owne wants and
imperfections; that so hee
might abandon his owne
righte.

righteousnelle, and might
rest himselfe wholly vpon the
righteousnesse which is in
Christ.

They obiekt the saying of
our Sauour in the 24. verse
of the same Chapter, *It is easi-
er for a Camel to goetherow the
eye of a needle, then for a rich
man to enter into the Kingdome
of God.*

The Answer herevnto is
easie; for, our Sauour speak-
eth not there of the possession
of Riches, but of their abuse,
when as rich men trust more
in them then in God; for, so
hee expoundeth himselfe vn-
to his Disciples, *Mark. 10. 24.*
*Children, how hard it is for them
that trust in Riches, to enter in-
to the Kingdome of God!*

Fourthly, they obiekt the

G 5

exam-

Obiect. 3.

¹ Mar. 19.
24.

Solut.

^m Mar. 10.
24.

Obiect. 4.

Webbe, G.

ⁿ Luk. 18.
28.

example of the Apostles, who make this profession, (*Peter* being the mouth of all the rest) *Luk, 18.28. Loe, we haue left all, and followed thee.*

^o Luk. 5.
28, 29.

To this I answer, by opening the meaning of the Apostles in that place: They did forsake all to follow Christ. But how? Not in regard of possession; for notwithstanding, after all this, wee finde that they had propriety of goods which they did not relinquish: *Leui* is said to haue left all, and to haue followed Christ; yet, in the very next words, hee is also said to haue made a great feast vnto Christ at his owne house. *Peter*, who saith, hee had forsaken all, retained still his house at *Capernaum*, with other necessaries and provisions,

on, as were fit to giue vnto Christ entertainment. And so likewise had his nettes and boates, and other implements for his fishing, euen after the time of our Sauours resurrection. Saint *Iohn* likewise had to provide for the Virgin *Mary*, whom Christ did commend vnto him; how then might they bee said to haue left all?

First, in regard of their estimation; when, in comparison of Christ and his benefits, they lightly esteemed them; and (as the Apostle *Paul* professeth) reputed them no better then dung.

Secondly, in regard of their hearts affection; they did not adhere vnto them, as before-time they had done.

Third.

p Mat. 4.
20, 21. & 8.
14.

9 Ioh. 21.
3.
1 Ioh. 19.
26, 27.

p Philip. 3.
7, 8.

Thirdly, in respect of their disposition, resolution, and readinesse to leaue all, rather then they would leaue Christ, and the profession of the Gospell.

Obiect. 5.

^t A&t. 2. 44

^u A&t. 5. 5.

10.

Fiftly, they alleadge the practice of the Primitiue Church, *Act. 2. 44. They had all things common.* And *Act. 5.*

Ananias and Sapphira for not doing so, did incurre a grieuous punishment. To which we answer:

Solut.

First, wee must remember, that fact of the Primitiue Church to haue beene done in the time of a grieuous persecution, when the Churches necessity was so great, that it could not bee supplied by any other meanes.

Secondly, it cannot be pro-
ued

ued that they gaue vp the propriety of their goods; but only distributed to euery one as they had need.

Thirddly, *Ananias* is censured and punished, not for the detaining of his goods; but for his dissembling and lying to the holy Ghost.

^y Act. 4. 35

^z Act. 5. 3.

These being the maine Arguments which our Aduersaries alleadge for the defence of voluntary Pouerty, and they no whit seruing (as hath beene shewed) to that purpose; let vs now see what we are to iudge of this their wilfull and affected Pouerty.

3. The Censure of voluntary Pouerty.

First, it cannot bee acceptable vnto God, because it hath no warrant at all out of his Word.

Secondly, Saint *Paul* giuing coun-

^a 1. Tim. 6.
17.

counsell to rich men; biddeth them, not to cast away their riches; but, *Charge them* (saith hee) *that they be not high-minded, nor put their trust in uncertaine Riches.* Surely, it had beene a more compendious way, to wish them at once, to leaue their Riches; so that they should not be in danger either of pride or vaine confidence, if that practice had beene so warrantable: but the Apostle saith no such thing.

Thirdly, if it were so acceptable a thing to God, and so meritorious to liue in Poverty; what made the Prophet heere to pray against it? *Giue me not Poverty.*

^b Pro. 30.
8.

^c Esa. 1.
12.

Fourthly, it is a practice meerely superstitious; for *who required these things at their hands?*

hands? It is a meere will-worship; and although it hath a shew of humility, yet it hath a touch of deepe hypocrisie.

^d Coloss. 2
23.

Fiftly, it is iniurious vnto God, who giueth vs abundantly all things to enioy; seeing Riches are (as wee haue heard) the gift of God, wee ought not to bee weary of Gods blessing: And (as *Iob* saith) *The Lord gineth, the Lord taketh away*, therefore a man ought not to make himselfe poore, because hee made not himselfe rich; neither can these things bee contemned and cast away, without contempt to his Maiesty, whose gifts they are.

^e 1. Tim. 6.
17.
^f Pro. 10.
21.

^g Iob 1. 21.

Sixtly, they are enemies to the common good; for, seeing

^h Luk. 16.
9.

Aug. Epist.
106.
Idem cont.
Faust. lib. 5.
c. 10.

Clemang. de
Statu Eccles.
pag. 53.

seeing Riches are the instruments of doing good, and to this end are giuen vnto vs by God, that with them we may doe good, and glorifie God; they are not wilfully to bee reiected, but rather vsed to the glory of our great Lord and Master, who hath intrusted them to our vse.

Senenthly, it fauoreth of the ancient heresie of the Pelagians, and of the Manichees, whose heresie heerein hath beene exploded long agoe.

Eighthly, we may retort their owne practice against them: for, though in words they commend voluntary Poverty; yet their deeds doe contradict it. *Clemangis*, a Doctor of their owne aboue two hundred yeares agoe, giueth testi-

testimony of them. These vowed Beggars (saith hee) are worse then the Pharises, ravening wolves in sheepes cloathing, who in words pretend the forsaking of the world, and in deeds, with all possible fraud hunt after it, making semblance in outward shew of austerity, chastity, humility, simplicity, but secretly in exquisite delicacies going beyond the luxuriousnesse of all worldly men, & like Bels Priests devouring the oblations of the people; and though not with their wines, yet with their brats, filling themselves greedily with wine and good cheere, polluting euery thing with Lust. Cornelius Agrippa doth thus describe them: From hence (saith hee) start out so many Stoicall Apes, such insolent meny-beggars, patch-

Cornel. Agrip. de vanit. Scient. c. 62.
Insolentissima posci nū-
mia, palliata
mendicalu-
la, cucullata
monstra, bar-
bigeri, funi-
geri, restige-
ri, saccoge-
ruli, &c.

patched rogues, cowled monsters, bush-beards, rope-bearers, halter-carriers, wallet-bearers; in idlenesse and beggery they live upon other mens labours, and going outwardly in coorse apparel like clownes, tyed with cords like theeves, their heads knotted like fooles, their Cowle hanging like a Cockscombe about their eares, with other markes of ignominie, which they pretend to beare for Christ; yet ambition ouercommeth them, and all things are referred to most arrogant titles. And Palingenius a Poet of their owne thus writeth of them.

Marcel. Paling.
in Leo.

The scum of Mankinde, Follies Spring,
the sinke of euey sinne;
Wolues clad in sheepskein, seruing God,
their gaine thereby to winne.
The vulgar sort with shew of good,

they

*they coozen and delude,
And vnder shew of Piety,
their villanies obtrude.
Thus doe they shroud a thousand sinnes,
a thousand things forbidden:
Thus Lust is cloaked, thus their Rapes,
and Sodomies are hidden.*

CHAP. 9.

First, of Pouerty, through negligence. Secondly, courses tending thereto. Thirdly, meanes to auoid it.

IT is a rule in Diuinity, that whatsoeuer wee are to pray against, wee must carefully auoid, and not carelessly expose our selues vnto: which, as in other things it may appeare, so in this case of Pouerty. *Agur pray-*

1. Of Pouerty through negligēce.

prayeth against it, wee may not affect it, much lesse either wilfully or wastfully throw our selues into it. As wee have seene the truth of it already against the vow of Poverty in Popery; so wee are to obserue it against the Poverty of many among our selues, occasioned wilfully & wofully through their owne negligence.

The guilt
of it.

i Deut. 15.

4.
k 1. Tim. 5.
8.

It is a sinne for any, through their own negligence or want of prouidence, to bring Poverty vpon themselves. There is an expresse prohibition against such kinde of Pouertie, *Deut. 15. 4.* And the Apostle deemeth him worse then an Infidel, that hath not care to provide for his owne. And in another place he giueth a strict charge

charge against it, willing men
to labour night and day, rather
then to bee chargeable to others;
injoyning this penance vnto
loysterers, that if any worke not,
they should not eat.

How iustly may this taxe
those droues of drones, (the
shame of our Land) the
swarmes of vagrant beggers,
whose whole life is nothing
else but a wandring from
place to place, vnder pretence
of Pouerty, vnto which wil-
fully they doe addiect them-
selues, and therefore wan-
der, because they would not
worke! This their course (ha-
uing no other ground, but
loue of idlenesse, & contempt
of paines in a lawfull Calling)
cannot be but greatly displea-
sing vnto God, who inioy-
neth

¹ 2. Thes. 3.
8.

^m Ibid. v. 10

In com-
mon Beg-
gers.

n 1. Thes. 4

II.

o 2. Thes.

3. 12.

P 2. Thes.

3. 11.

q Gen. 4.

14.

neth that euery man should walke in some lawfull Calling, and eate his owne Bread. This they doe not, and therefore the curse of God pursueth them; for generally, they are giuen vp to most horrible sinnes of iniustice & vncleanesse. They walke inordinately; for they range not themselues into any families; but liue more like bruit beasts then men. They are not members of any particnlar congregation, but excommunicate themselues from all Churches; and so liue, as though there were no God, no Christ, nor true Religion; hauing *Cains* curse vpon them, and marke about them, to be Vagabonds and runnagates in the Earth. O that Authority would

would sharply proceede against these disorderly wanderers ! and that the good lawes enacted against them, were as carefully put in execution ! It would tend much to the honour of our Nation, and more to our Religion.

But how shall I lament their misery, who not foreseeing the smart of penury, doe through their own negligence, and want of providence, *suffer pouerty to steale upon them?* They are like the vnjust Steward in the Gospell, *They cannot digge, and to begge, they are ashamed.* Are they ashamed to begge? why then shame they not at those courses which tend to beggery? How many, many times rush violently into want

In wastfull
Spenders.

[Pro.6.11

[Luk.16.3

* Mat. 6. 13

2. Courses
tending
to Pouer-
ty.

want where they neede not,
and out off great meanes,
runne into extreme misery,
through want of good fore-
sight? Who can pittie them
that will not pittie them-
selues? what mercy is to bee
shewd vnto those, who are so
vnmerciful to their own bow-
els? let vs all beware of this,
that wee doe not rob our
selues; we pray against temp-
tation, let vs not wilfully
throw our selues into temp-
tation. *Agur* prayeth against
pouerty: let vs all take heede
that wee wilfully throw not
our selues into the same.

To this end let vs take a
little notice of those courses
that tend to pouerty, and
then of the remedy to pre-
uent the same. As concer-
ning

ning the forme, whereof wee shall many waies, & meanes that bring a man to pouerty.

1. Idleneſſe, when a man will not take paines to provide for thoſe outward meanes, but either liue without any calling at all, or elſe not apply himſelfe induſtriouſly to the workes of his vocation. So ſaith Salomon, *He becommeth poore that dealeth with a ſlack hand.* And againe, *The Sluggard will not plow, by reaſon of the cold, therefore hee ſhall begge in Harueſt, and haue nothing.* And againe, *How long wilt thou ſleepe, O Sluggard, when wilt thou ariſe out of thy ſleepe? yet a little ſleepe, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands to ſleepe: therefore thy pouerty commeth as one*

H

that

Pro. 10. 4

Pro. 20. 4

Pro. 6. 9,
10, 11.

Webbe, G.

25155

*that travellet by the way, and
thy want as an armed man.*

2. Vnthriftnesse, when a man, although he be not idle altogether, yet taketh not good courses in his labours or his actions: and this doth manifest it selfe diuers waies.

¹Psal. 112.
5.

1. In the carelesse managing of his affaires: *A good man will guide his affaires with discretion.* The want of this discretion in managing of affaires, hath caused many to want a good successe of their labours, and so to fall into want before they are aware.
2. In heedelesse running into suretiship, when a man will be too kind natured, too facill and easie to bee entreated to enter into bands, and to entangle himselfe with sure-

suretiship for others. *He that is surety for a stranger, shal smart for it, Pro. 11. 15.* 3. An humour of borrowing and running into the Vsurers booke: for this is the very henbane of thrift, a fire to roote out a mans increale, *If thou hast runne with the footmen, and they haue wearied thee: How canst thou contend with Horses? If a man cannot liue vpon the principall, how shall hee liue by paying interest? 4. By frequenting lewd places, and euill company: He that followeth after vaine persons, shall haue poueriy enough. Pro. 28. 19.* 5. Following vaine sports, pleasures, & delights: for these are they that will bring a man to a morsell of bread.

^b Pro. 11. 15.

^c Job. 32. 12.

^d Ierem. 12. 5.

^e Pro. 28. 19.

3 Riot and excesse is a principall meanes to vsheer in pouerty: whether it bee in our dyet or our apparell, or other our expenses: for first, riotous dyet wil bring a man to pouerty, when men pull all through their throat; *The Drunkard and the glutton shall come to Pouerty, and drowzinesse shall cloath a man with ragges,* Pro. 23.21.

8 Pro.23.
21.

Greg Mor.
lib.9.ca.20.

Secondly, excelle in brauery bringeth to Pouerty, when men hang all vpon their backs; *Pride* (as one well noteth) is a priuy theefe, it stealeth away all, vntill there bee nothing left.

Thirdly, extraordinary expenses doe no lesse, when men are too lauish aboue their meanes. Thus *Salomon* maketh

keth a waster and a poore man
cousin Germanes, *Pro. 18. 6.*
And to this end *Diogenes* said
merrily, but not vtruly of a
Prodigall, *He casteth his house*
so long out at the windowes, that
at the last his house wil cast him
out of the dores.

Iustin. in
salbus & io-
cis.

Fourthly, strife and conten-
tion, when men are giuen to
strife and quarrellings, to con-
tend and go to Law for euery
thing: This is a course direct-
ly tēding to Pouerty; through
contention many a man is vn-
done. *The beginning of strife*
is as when one letteth out water:
therefore leane off contention be-
fore it bee meddled with, Pro.
17. 14.

h Pro. 17.
14.

Fiftly, want of faith, the
feare of God, and true bedi-
ence to his will; for, as there is

i Psa. 112.

3.

k Pro. 13.

18.

The third
meanes to
preuent
Pouertie.

l Pro. 10. 4.

m Pro. 13.

4.

n Ephes.
4. 28.

a promise made, that *Riches and treasures shall bee in his house that feareth the Lord*; so there is a threatning, that *Pouerty and shame shall bee to him that refuseth instruction*, Pro. 13. 18.

From the causes of *Pouerty*, come wee now vnto the remedie; from the courses tending to it, vnto the meanes to preuent it: And they are the contrary vertues opposite vnto the abouenamed vices.

First, labour and diligence; *The hand of the diligent maketh rich* (saith Salomon) Pro. 10. 4.

And againe, *The soule of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing; but the soule of the diligent shall bee made fat*. Pro. 13. 4.

And this remedie is prescribed by the Apostle, Eph. 4. 28. *Labour,*

hour, working with your owne hands the thing that is good, that yee may haue to giue to him that needeth.

Secondly, Prouidence; wisely and discreetly to manage our estate. Bee thou diligent to know the estate of thy flock, and looke well vnto thine heards, Pro. 27. 23. The thoughts of the Wise tend to plenteousnesse, Pro. 21 5. A good man will guide his affaires with discretion, Psal. 112. 5.

o Pro. 27. 23.

p Pro. 21. 5

q Psal. 112. 5

Thirdly, Temperance: he who would auoid Pouertie, must (as Salomon speaketh) put his knife to his throat, and not be a man giuen to his appetite: He must not be desirous of dainties, for they are a deceitfull meate, Pro. 23. 2, 3.

r Pro. 23. 2

• Fourthly, Frugalitie: for
H 4 there

Webbe, G.

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f Iohn 6.
12.

there is as much skill in keeping, as there is in getting. And our blessed Saviour giueth vs a notable example of this Frugalitie and thriftinesse, in that, after hee had fed five thousand persons with five loaves, he gaue charge to gather vp the fragments that remained, that nothing might be lost.

o Pro. 10.
22.
u Ps. 127.2

Fifthly, Pietie and the feare of God : for the blessing of God alone, maketh rich ; *Without which, it is but lost labour to rise vp early, and to sit vp late, and to eat the bread of carefulnesse.* He therefore that would auoide earthly puerie, let him labour to be rich towards God, rich in Faith, to depend vpon Gods providence, rich in obedience, to obey

James 2.
5.

obey his Will; for if wee be not wanting vnto God; vndoubtedly, the Lord will not be wanting vnto vs: *Dauids* obseruation shall euer in this case goe for currant; *I haue* beene yong, and now am old, yet haue I not seene the Righteous forsaken, nor his seede begging bread, Psal. 37. 25.

y Psal. 37.
25.

CHA. 10.

First, whether the faithfull may fall into Pouertie. Secondly, their comfort in their Pouerty. Thirdly, the right vse of such Pouertie.

IT is a Paradox of the Stoicks, that *A Wise man cannot be poore*; And yet no Paradox

*Seneccade be-
nes. li. 7 c. 4.*

radox neither, if it be taken in his true sence; for he who is wise, hath the choicest riches; and in euery estate, hauing learned to be content, can neuer be said to want: yet, take we Pouerty in the larger sence, for the Indigencie and want of outward meanes; It cannot be denied, but that it may befall a wise man, a vertuous man, a faithfull man, yea, the most dearest of Gods Children: *Outward accidents may happen alike to all, to the Righteous as well as to the wicked, to the Good as well as to the bad,* Eccles 9.2. Thus we reade of *David*, poore, and needie; of *Elias*, in want, and hungrie; of *Peter*, Pennyletse; of *Lazarus*, begging at the rich mans gates; of many renowned Professors,

^a Eccles. 9.

2.

^b Psal.

^c 1. King.

17.

^d Luk. 16.

20.

fessors, Confessors, and holy Martyrs in such penury, that they did want ordinary food, and rayment, and were driuen to wander about *in Sheepskins and Goatskins, being destitute, afflicted & tormented.* Extreme pouertie and necessitie may befall the godly ; neither can any plead an exemption or immunitie against the same.

No, will some say : hath not Godlinessse the Promise as well of the things of this life, as of the Life to come ? I answer, It is true ; but yet with difference : Eternall blessings only are promised absolutely : Temporall blessings with restraint ; namely, if they serue for Gods glory, and the good of his children : According to that of the Apostle, *Wee know that*
all

• Heb. 11.
37.

Obiect. 1.
f 1. Tim. 4.
8.

Solut.

8 Rom. 8.
28.

Webbe, G.

all things worke together for good to them that loue God, Rom. 8. 28. As well aduersitie as prosperitie, as well Pouertie as plentie, turneth all for the best to Gods Children; And therefore the Promise of God doth neuer faile them.

Obiect. 2.

Ps. 34. 10.

Solut.

The like answere wee may apply vnto another obiection, which may be framed out of Psal. 34. 10. *The yong Lyons doe lack and suffer hunger, but they that seeke the Lord, shall want not any good thing.* It is not simply said, They shall neuer want, that they shall neuer be in need and necessitie: but that they shall not want any good thing; why? Is not outward means a good thing? Are not wealth and riches Gods blessings? yes: but how-
foener

soeuer they are good in themselves, they may not be so to vs. It may be, they would hurt vs if we had them: It may be better with vs to be without them. In such a case, if the Lord doe not grant them, hee doth benefit vs; But we may be sure that he will not withhold from vs any thing that might be good vnto vs.

The maine place which might seeme to impugne this, and which hath much perplexed diuers of Gods children in the case of Pouertie, is that of *Dauid*, Psal. 37 25. *I haue beene yong, and now am old; yet I neuer saw the Righteous forsaken, nor his seede begging bread.* To which I answer, that *Dauids* saying may be three waies vnderstood. As his

Obiect. 3.

i Ps. 37. 25.

Solut.

Webbe, G.

Mr. Perkins
in Heb. 11.
37.

his owne obseruation in his
time : for he saith not, *The
Righteous is neuer forsaken,*
but that he neuer saw it: And
indeed, it is a rare thing to see
it. 2. It may be meant of such
extremitie in want, which is
altogether destitute of reliefe.
Now albeit the children of
God sometimes are in want,
yet, God doth not quite for-
sake them, but doth alwaies re-
lieue them, either with tem-
porall or spirituall comforts.
3. We may thus take *Dauids*
meaning, *The Righteous man
is neuer forsaken and his seed to;*
For if God lay temporall cha-
stisements on any of his ser-
uants, suffering them to want,
yet, he forsaketh not his seede
after him, but renueth his
mercy towards them, if they
walke

walke in obedience before him ; hee may make triall of godly parents by want ; but their godly children shall surely be blessed : so that this hindreth not, but that the godly may be in want ; and that many who are in great want and necessitie, may notwithstanding be in the fauour of Almighty God, heires of his Kingdome.

Let no man then be too much cast downe, or disquieted within himselfe, when he findeth the rod of God (in this kind) vpon himselfe ; Satan indeede will seeke to perswade vs in such a case, that wee are out of the fauour of God, that wee belong not vnto him, and therby doth cast many doubtings.

2.
The comforts of the faithful in their Pouertie.

Webbe, G.

tings and dumps into the hearts of the godly thus afflicted. But it is an easie matter to answer all his cauels and objections in this kind, if wee be but a little conuersant in the Booke of God, wherehence wee may finde such abundance of comfort for vs in these our extremities. As;

^k Eccles. 9.

I.

First, *No man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before them*, Eccles. 9. 1. that is, No man can know whether he be loued or hated of God, by these cōmon outward things which happen alike to all: There is no iudgement that can bee giuen, either of our selues, in respect of our outward estate. And therefore in such a case, a man must
comfort

comfort himselfe with that of the Apostle ; *There is no temptation hath taken vs, but such as appertaineth to Man; and that God is faithfull, who will not suffer vs to be tempted above that which wee are able, but will giue a good issue vnto the same.*

Secondly, when pouertie lyeth vpon vs, we must comfort vp our selues in this, That we are not alone in this case ; *The same afflictions haue beene endured by diuers of Gods deare Children before vs.* How poore was Ioseph, Iob, Lazarus, yea, Iesus Christ himselfe our blessed Sauour? who for our sakes did vndergoe a meane estate: At his birth, to be borne in an Inne; and for want of other roome, to bee laid

^r 1. Cor.
10.13.

^m 1. Pet. 5

9.

ⁿ Gen. 37.

23.

^o Iob 1. 21

^p Luk. 16.

20.

^q Luk. 2.

7.

^r Luk. 9.

58.

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^r Luk. 9.
58.

^r Mat. 27.
60.

laid in a Manger; during his whole life, not hauing a place *de proprio*, whereon to lay his head; and at his death, he had not so much ground of his owne, as might serue for a burying place, but was laid in *Iosephs* Tombe: which is a great comfort to any childe of God in like distresse: for why should any one be dismaied at that estate which Christ Iesus and his dearest seruants haue vndergone before him for his example?

^r Iob. 1.
21.
Eccles. 5.
15.

Thirdly, consider well the nature of pouettie; No man is borne rich: *Naked we came out of our Mothers wombe, and naked we must retorne againe.* The greatest riches heere in this World, are but a composed pouertie, and our liues
are

are as a continuall disease, whereunto these worldly things are to be applied but as medicines and plaisters,

August. in
Psal. 102.

Fourthly, looke we vnto the author and ouerseer of our pouertie ; Is it not the Lord who hath inflicted the same vpon vs ? doth not hee know and take notice of the pouertie of his children ? doth not hee obserue what they want ? hath not he promised that he will neuer faile them, nor forsake them ? Is there not an assurance, that *All things shall worke together for the best, to them that loue God, and are called according to his purpose?*

u Reuel 2.
9.

x Rom. 8.
28.

Fifthly and lastly, what a comfort is this in all want, pouertie or necessitie whatsoever,

Webbe, G.

^a Rom.8.
35,37.

seuer, that wee are sure it cannot hinder our chiefest good? For what shall separate vs from the loue of Christ? shall tribulation, or distresse, or persecution, or famine, or nakednesse, or perill, or sword? No, for in al these things we are more then conquerours through him that loued vs.

3. The
right vse
of Pouer-
tie.

Having these comforts to support vs, when the burthen of pouertie doth lie vpon vs, let vs be carefull to make a good and profitable vse of the same, that so we may be bettered by it, and not offend in it. To this end wee must endeuer;

^b Pro.14.
29.

First, To beare with patience the pouertie laid vpon vs; for this is a point of great wisdom: *Hee that is patient,*
is

is of great understanding, but
an impatient man exalteth folly,
Pro. 14. 29. Heere is the true
touch of pietie, It is good for
a man both to hope, and quietly to
waite for the saluation of the
Lord. This is that which God
requireth of vs; In Patience
possesse your soules. The true
touchstone of Religion; for
Patience bringeth experience,
& experience, Hope, Rom. 5. 4.
The very badge and cogni-
sance of a Saint, This is the
patience of Saints, Reuel.
14. 12.

Secondly, wee must inure
our selues to beare the yoke
laid vpon vs, with fitting our
selues and our affections
thereunto. If we cannot fit
our estate to our minde; let
vs fit our mindes according
to

^c Lament.
3. 26.

^d Mat. 21.
19.

^e Rom. 5.
4.

^f Reuel. 14.
12.

^g Lament.
3. 27.

Chrysost.de
Lazar.Conc.
2.

to our estates : Hee is not to be esteemed poore (saith Chrysostome) whose minde agreeth with his estate; but Hee, who although Hee hath abundance, is not satisfied.

Phil. 4.
11, 12.

Senec. epi. 2.

Thirdly, We must labour for true contentation: excellent to this purpose is the example of the Apostle, Philip. 4. 11. I haue learned, in what soeuer estate I am, therewith to be content, I know how to be abased, and how to abound, euery where, and in all things I am instructed; both to be full, and to be hungrie; both to abound, and to suffer neede. Sweetly Seneca; Contented pouertie is an honest thing: But it is not now pouertie, if a man be content; Hee that agreeth well with his pouertie, is a rich man.

Fourth.

Fourthly, wee must be-
ware of the sinfull effects
which Satan will labour to
extract out of pouertie, as
first, at the repining of Gods
thus disposing of vs; *The clay*
may not quarrell with the potter,
Why hast thou made me thus?
Secondly, enuying at the
more prosperous successe
of others; *Fret not thy selfe*
because of euill doers, neither be
thou enuious at others prosperi-
tie. Thirdly, vsing of vnlaw-
full meanes, of which more
at large hereafter in the view
of the reasons of Agur his
petition.

Fifthly, wee must labour
to make a good vse of our
wants and distresses, we must
consider them as the hand of
God vpon vs, and thereby be
led

i Rom.9.

20. 21.

k Ps.37.1.

i Pro.30.9

m Mat. 5.3

led to a view of our finnes,
and by the consideration of
these sins, to be brought vn-
to that spirituall pouertie, vn-
to which our blessed Saviour
hath pronounced a blessing,
*Math. 5.3. Blessed are the poore
in spirit, for theirs is the King-
dome of Heauen.*

C H A. II.

*First, of Pouertie in others. Se-
condly, the diuers sorts of
poore. Thirdly, our duty in
respect of either.*

I. Pouerty
in others.

AS wee haue scene a pat-
terne for the well bea-
ring and right vsing of Po-
uertie in our selues; so let vs
now take a view of our duty
when

when we behold it in others: for our Sauour telleth vs, that we shal haue some poore alwaies with vs; And the Lord sheweth the reason, *Deut. 15. 11.* why, when as he could haue made all rich, hee made some poore, that the *Rich might open his hand wide, and be helpfull to the poore and needie in the Land.* Therefore hee commendeth their case vnto others frequently in sacred Scriptures; willing those who are more wealthy, to take notice of them; not to despise them, not to hurt them; but to shew themselves charitable vnto them.

Which respect vnto the poore (that we may the better obserue and put in practice) let vs take notice of the

I

se-

ⁿ Mat. 26.
11.

^o Deut. 15
11.

^p Luk. 14.
13.

^q Pro. 17.

^s Pro. 22.
16.

^r Rom. 12.

13.

2. The seuerall sorts of poore.

Webbe, G.

*Stowes
Chronicle
in the
raigne of
Edward
the sixt, pa.
1322.*

seuerall kindes of poore people, wherein wee will follow that notable distribution of the Poore, made by that Reuerend Father, and blessed Martyr, Bishop *Ridley*, in his Sermon made before King *Edward* the sixth of blessed memorie. The Poore are there distributed into a three-fold ranke.

1. The poore by *Impotencie*.

2. The poore by *Casualtie*.

3. The *thriftlesse poore*.

In the former ranke, The poore by *Impotencie* are of three sorts.

1. The *Fatherlesse* or poore mans childe.

2. The aged and blinde poore.

3. The

3. The diseased poore.

In the second ranke, The poore by casualtie, are likewise three sorts of poore people comprehended.

1. The wounded Souldier.
2. The decayed Housholder.
3. Hee that hath lost his goods by *Fire, Robberie, &c.*

The third ranke of poore, viz: The Thriftlesse poore, are also of three sorts.

1. The Riotous person that consumeth all.
2. The Vagabond and sturdie Begger.
3. The Idle person.

To euery one of these, there is a dutie to bee performed, though in a different kinde, according to their different

3. Our dutie in respect of

r. Thrift-
les poore.

qualitie. And first, to begin with the last sort (because of of them we shall speake least) *Thriftlesse poore* may not be fauored, but rather punished: for such kinde of poore, there is a threefold almes to be provided.

t 1. Thefs.
5.14.

First, *Admonition*: Wee beseech you brethren (saith the Apostle) admonish them that are unruly, 1. Thef. 5. 14. We should shew them of their sin, and tell them of their danger, if so by any meanes we may reclaime them. A duty belonging not only to the Magistrate & Minister, out of publike authority, but also to the people, out of sociall charity: mutuall compassiō should teach vs this, and the care of community, both in regard of

u Jude 20.

of the infectiousnesse of the euill example, and the danger of wrath vpon our selues, if we neglect this dutie vnto them.

Secondly, *Reformation*: If Admonition will not serue, we must in our places seeke to restraine those idle courses which tend to pouertie; Parents, in their Children; Masters, in their seruants; Magistrates, in their charge; euery one as his place and calling doth require.

Thirdly, *Correction*: If neither of the former will preuaile, this must be put in execution. *The blauenesse of the wound, serueth to purge euill, and the stripes within the belly,* Pro. 20. 30. A particular punishment to this effect the Apo-

x I. Cor.
5. 6.
✓ Ioh. 7. 11
12.

a Ioel 1. 3
b Pro. 27.
23.
c I. King. 3
28.

d Pro. 20.
30.

^c 2. Thess.
3. 10.

^f Rom. 13.
4.

^g Isay 1.
23.

stle enioyneth, 2. Thess. 3. 10. Wee command you, that if any would not worke, they should not eat: and other corporall punishments are to be inflicted vpon them, according to the good and warrantable orders of the state in which we liue; For the Magistrate doth not beare the sword in vaine, but is the minister of God, a reuenger to execute wrath vpon him that doth euill: and where they who should looke to the redresse of this abuse, are negligent in their dutie; They are teamed companions of theeuers, accessaries with them in their euils, Isay 1. 23.

By how much the more, is it to be lamented, that hauing so many good lawes, and

and statutes among vs enacted
for the suppressing of these
thriftlesse courses ; they are
suffered to continue so com-
mon among vs; sturdy rogues
and wandring vagabonds, so
frequently begging from
house to house; so many Ale-
house hanter, idle persons,
gamesters, frequenters of The-
aters, suffred without control-
ment to goe on in those waste-
full courses which they fol-
low ? Our Age aboundeth
with the sinnes of *Sodome* ;
abundance of idlenesse over-
floweth all places, and the
thriftlesse courses of so many
among vs, is like to make a
poore land of this rich Iland.
O ! that our good *Iosias*
would bee more carefull, to
breake downe the houses of the
I 4 So-

*Anno 39.
Elix.*

*h Ezech.
16.49.*

Webbe, G.

i 2. King.
23.7.

Sodomites among vs. I meane our tippling ale-houses, and lasciuious theaters, the very nurseries of all riot, excesse, and idlenesse. O ! that our pettie officers would watch more diligently to the suppressing of our straggling beggers, and that houtholders would make more conscience not to countenance their disordered course of living, by relieuing them when they come to their houses. Surely, to feede or cloath these sturdy beggers, and wandring Rogues, is a kinde of great vniustice : It is impietic against God, an iniurie vnto the Common-weale, and a nurserie of vnthriftines, and so by consequence, a meanes to participate with them in their wickednesse.

I know what will be allea-
ged; They do it in pittie and in
compassion. But this is not a
worke of mercie: and *Foolish*
pittie, spoileth a Citie: It is a
worke of mercie, to suppress
sinne, and both pittie and pie-
tie, should meete together;
There is *miser cordia puniens*,
mercie in punishing; and
there is *crudelitas parcens*, a
crueltie in sparing. This doth
fester vp the sore of sinne, that
causeth the cure. Therefore I
conclude, that it is a worke of
crueltie, and not mercie, to
spare the idle and inordinate
liuer, and to feede the wan-
dring well able, and lusty beg-
ger.

As concerning the two o-
ther sorts of poore; 1. the
poore by *Impotencie*. 2. the
poore

2. Poore
by Impo-
tencie or
Casualtie.

poore by *Casualtie*, wee will ioyne them both together, because they are the poore of Gods making ; They onely may be said, to be in the case of pouertie ; And to them onely, we are to haue a charitable respect. Our dutie, in respect of them, is,

^l Coloss.
3.12.

^m Rom.
12.15.

ⁿ 2. Cor.
11.29.

First, to pittie them, and so sympathize with them; *Put on the bowels of mercie and compassion, Coloss. 3.12. Pittie them that are in bonds, as if yee were in bonds with them.*

Weepe with them that weepe, Rom. 12.15. And hereof, we haue a notable example in the Apostle, who (saith he) is weake, and I am not weake ? who is afflicted, and I burne not ? 2. Cor. 11.29.

Secondly, It is not sufficient

ent onely to pittie the poore,
but wee must also comfort
them, *Comfort the feeble-min-*
ded, support the weake, 1. Thes.
5.14. *Man that is in miserie,*
should be comforted of his friends
Iob.6.14. Which, where it is
neglected, it is an euident
signe, as it followeth in the
same place, *That men haue for-*
saken the feare of the Almightie.

Thirdly, neither is it enough
to comfort in words; but we
must according to our abilitie
relieve them, and support
them in deeds: for so saith S.
James, *If a brother or a sister be*
naked and destitute of daily food,
and one of you say vnto him,
Depart in peace, be warmed and
filled; notwithstanding, ye giue
them not those things which are
need-

o 1. Thes.
5.14.

P Iob 6.14

9 James 2.
15, 16.

Webbe. G.

*Deut. 15
7.*

vers. 11.

*Rom. 12.
13.*

needfull to the body, what will it profit them? Therefore the Lord requireth as well a relieuing hand, as a pittiful heart, and a comforting mouth; Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand to thy poore brother, Deut. 14. 7. Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poore, and to thy needy in the land. And the Apostle Paul requireth a communicating to the necessities of the Saints, as well as a comforting of the distressed Saints, Rom. 12. 13.

And here, O that I might be the poore mans Preacher, to perswade compassion and mercie to the obdurate hearts of this frozen world! where is that true pittying of the poore? where is that fellow sym-

sympathizing in their misery? how hard-hearted and hard-fisted are the men of our age to the fatherlesse and the widowes, to the aged, maimed, and decaied poore? how brieft are those collections which are gathered in our Churches at the Brieftes of them who haue Letters Patents, to collect towards their reliefe after losses by Sea or Land, by Fire, Piracies, or other such like accidents! O heauens, drop downe more pittie and compassion into our frozen and benumbed hearts: *No man* (almost) *careth for the affliction of Ioseph*: yet the Lord commendeth the poore very frequently to our consideration: Threatning the neglect hereof to be punished with a great

^u Amos 6.
6.

^x Pro. 24.
19.
^y Pro. 17.
5.

great and grieuous punishment; and the motives to stir vs Christians, vp to this holy duty, are exceeding many.

^a Ephel.
25.

First, Wee are *members one of another*, Eph. 4. 25. and therefore, there should be a compassion and sympathie betwixt vs, in respect of our neere linking together in the body of Christ. In the naturall body, if a thorne be in the foote, the backe boweth, the eye searcheth; the hands doe their best to pull out that cause of anguish: shall we not much more do in the Spiritual body, as we are members one of another?

^b 1. Cor.
12, 21.

^c Heb. 13.
3.

Secondly, wee our selues are yet in the body, and may suffer what others feele. Are some poore, because age will
not

not suffer them to provide
meanes to maintaine them-
selues, as heretofore when
they were yong? So may it
be with vs, if wee liue vntill
we be old. Are others desti-
tute, and depriued of their
friends, and left in miserie?
The case may be our owne.
Doth sicknes, disease or some
other infirmitie, bring those
vnto pouerty? None of vs can
plead exemption from it. Doe
we heare the mone of those
who haue beene vndone by
fire, water, robberie, piracie,
and other such like meanes?
How soone may the same be-
fall vs? *hodie mihi, cras tibi*;
another mans losse to day,
may be ours to morrow. As
therefore, we would be pittie
ed and relieued our selues, so
let

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let vs be ready to relieue and pittie others in their necessities.

d Ioh. 13.
35.

e Ioh. 3. 14

f 1. Cor.
13. 4.

g Heb. 13.
16.

h Pro. 10.
12.

i. Pet. 4. 8.

j Heb. 13. 1.

k Isay 1. 17

Thirdly, Charitie is an especiall badge of Christianitie: Hereby shall men know that yee are my disciples, if yee loue one another: And hereby wee know that wee are translated from death to life, if we loue the brethren. Now this Charitie is full of bountie and liberalitie, 1. Cor. 13. 4. The fruit and effect whereof, To doe good, and to communicate, is a sacrifice acceptable, and well pleasing vnto God, and hath this testimonie, that it cowereth a multitude of sinnes: Therefore brotherly charitie should remaine within vs, which should expaine it selfe in doing good, & in relieuing the oppressed.

Fourth-

Fourthly and lastly, the Reward that doth accompanie the same, should stirre vs vp vnto it. *God is not vnrighteous, to forget our worke and labour of loue, which wee shew t e- wards his name, in ministring to the Saints. Hee that giueth to the poore, shall not lack ; And though wee may seeme in this case, to cast away our bread vpon the waters, yet after many daies, we shall finde it ; for the liberall soule shall be made fat ; and hee that watereth, shall bee watered also himselfe. Therefore, let vs not withhold our bountie from the poore, when it is in the power of our hand to doe it : but be readie to communicate to the necessitie of others, as occasion shall be offered vnto vs ; let vs doe it cheere-*

¹ Heb. 6.
10.

^m Pro. 28.
27.

ⁿ Eccles.
11.1.

^o Pro. 11.
25.

^p Pro. 3.
27.

^q Phil. 4.
14.

^r Galat. 6.
 10.
^f 2. Co. 9. 7
^t 1. Tim. 6.
 18.
^u Ephe. 4.
 28.
^x Pro. 30.
 8.
^y Luk. 18.
 22.

cheerfully, and not grudgingly, for *God loveth a cheerefull giuer* : let vs be rich in good workes, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. To this end, let vs be industrious in our places, and frugall in our expences, *that we may haue to giue to him that needeth*. So shall we not need our selues to feare pouertie ; against which, *Agur* here prayeth : and shall be sure, if pouertie should befall vs, not to faile of a better and more lasting treasure in the heauens.

CHA.

CH A. 12.

First, Riches, the second rock which Agur would avoid. Secondly, Why Agur doth pray against riches. Thirdly, the nature & qualitie of riches. Fourthly, their vanitie. Fifthly, the vanitie of men about the same.

Giue me not Riches.

HAuing past the gulf of Pouertie which Agur seeketh to shun, lest he should be swallowed vp with despair, and dismall cares; wee come now to the other extreme which he would avoid, the rock of Riches, against which he is afraid to split him-

1. Riches the second Rocke, which Agur would avoid.

himselfe; That was on the roade of Aduersitie; This towards the Promontorie of prosperitie: That more dreadfull and terrible in sight; This more dangerous, and readiest to hurt. Both ominous: And therefore his desire is to auoid them both: And hauing in the forepart of the Text, praised against the one extreme: *Giue me not pouertie*; hee now praieth against the other; *Giue me not Riches*.

2. Why *Agur* doth pray against Riches.

That *Agur* should pray against Pouertie, it is the lesse to be wondred at; because it hath so little glory in it, and doth expose a man to so many cares, and feares: But that hee should with like affection pray against wealth and riches, may seeme a matter strange, and

and much to be admired; seeing, it is the thing which mortals most affect, and the greatest part of the sonnes of men, so greedily hunt after. *There be many* (saith *David*) *that say, Who wil shew vs any good?* And worldlings esteeme wealth as their chiefest good; which is the cause men take so great paines, rising vp early, and late taking rest, compassing about Sea and Land; and all to compasse a little wealth. Why then should *Agur* so much dislike that which most men affect? why should his prayer be so contrary to other mens desire?

^a Psal. 4. 6.

That the reason hereof may more plainely appeare, it will not be impertinent to the present discourse, if we diue a little

3. The nature of Riches.

tle into the nature of wealth and riches, what they are in themselves, what to vs, what is their vse, what their abuse; why they are no more to bee regarded, why so much to be feared.

^a In themselves.

^b Mat. 19.

17.

^c Gen. 1.

31. & 2. 11,

12.

^d 1. Tim.

6. 17.

Hos. 2. 8.

^e Deut. 28.

2, 3, 4, 5.

And first, for the nature of Riches in themselves; Wee cannot but acknowledge them to be good in their owne nature, as being the creatures of God, who himselfe is only absolutely good; yea, the fountaine of all goodnesse, and whose testimonie also hath approved them to be good. Neither were they only good in the estate of Innocencie, but euen after the fall: seeing in sacred Scripture they are called *the gifts of God*; nay more, his *Rewards* bestowed on them

them that feare him; yea, more
then that, *the blessings of God:*
for so saith the Wiseman, *The
blessing of God maketh rich.*
And it is said by an vsuall
phrase in the Booke of God,
that God blessed those who
were enriched, and thereby
they became rich. And in that
the Lord hath vouchsafed
them to so many of his dea-
rest seruants, as *Abraham, Isa-
ac, Iacob, Iob, David*, and o-
thers recorded in sacred Hi-
storie for rich men : It is an
euident argument of the good-
nesse of riches in themselves.

But howsoever they are
good in their own nature, and
as they proceed from God;
yet, to vs they are of an indif-
ferent nature, not of an abso-
lute or immutable goodnesse,
but

^f Pro. 10.
22.

Psal. 112.
1.3.

^g Gen. 26.
12.
Iob. 42. 12.

^h Gen. 13.
2.
Iob 1.3.

2. In re-
spect of vs.

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Terent. in
Heaut. Di-
uitie sunt ut
i illius ani-
mus est qui
eas possidet,
qui uti scit,
ei bona sunt,
illi qui non
utitur rectè,
mala.

August. in
Aggæ. homil.
30.

Diuitie dā-
tur bonis, ne
putentur
mala; malis,
ne putentur
bona; multis,
ne putentur
magna.

but subiect to alteration, ac-
cording to their owners. The
very Heathen could tell vs
thus much : *Riches are as they
are used, good to the good, who
use them well ; euill to the euill,
who abuse them vnto sinne.* They
are like Fire and Water, good
seruants, but bad masters; good
seruants, when a good minde
ruleth them ; wicked tyrants
ouer an abiect master : *Augu-
stine* hath an excellent saying
to this purpose ; *Riches are
sometimes giuen by God vnto
good men, lest they should bee
thought altogether euill : Some-
times they are bestowed vpon e-
uill men, lest they should be dee-
med the only good : they are be-
stowed promiscuously vpon many,
lest they might seeme to haue in
them any singularitie.* The
good-

goodnesse then of wealth and riches in regard of vs, is in their vse, onely good to the Regenerate, who haue a right vse of them, and therefore good to them, because they are instruments of wel doing. And therefore howsoeuer they may bee reputed good, yet in respect of the degree of their goodnesse, but of little worth & excellency, to be compared with true good, spirituall graces, and eternall ioyes.

For what worth is there in wealth (that wee may looke a little farther into the qualitie of the same) that may deserue respect from vs? when the gold & siluer (the very Elixar of all earthly wealth) are but the drosse of the earth, and clods of clay, in their prime
K site,

4. The vanity of riches.

1. In their substance.

^b Hab. 2. 6

site, placed in the very entrails of the earth, which we trample vpon with our feete; when the richest Jewels, and most precious Stones are but the rubbish of the sand, or excrements of fishes; when the most sumptuous household furniture is but the loane borrowed from other creatures, vassals to our selues; when the largest possessions, and demaines, are not so much as a little point in comparison of the globe of the earth, and the whole earth not so bigge as a Pease in comparison with Heauen? when all the excellency of these earthly things is onely grounded on mens opinion, and the greatest part of their esteeme is onely from competition; where the wisest

felt among the sonnes of men,
callesh wealth but a thing of
nought, and hee who had the
greatest confluence and expe-
rience of them, could giue no
better testimonie of them then
this, *Vanity of vanities, vanity
of vanities, all is vanity.*

As riches are but vaine, if
we had the greatest share that
could be imagined in them, so
are they fickle, and vncertaine;
wee are not sure to get them,
nor being gotten, to keepe
them. It is the stile which the
Apostle doth giue vnto them,
uncertaine Riches. How many
are there, who making this
Māmon of Iniquity, the Idol
in which they chiefly trust,
doe make vnto it many a wea-
rie Pilgrimage, vndertaking
painfull iourneyes, sustaining

K 2

much

^cPro.23.5

^dEccl.1.2.

2. In their
vncertain-
ty.

^c1.Tim.6.
17.

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f Pro. II.
24, 25.

much penury and misery, haz-
zarding themselves to innu-
merable dangers both by Sea
and Land, and all to haue that
Idol fauourable and propiti-
ous vnto them: and yet are
turned away with a frowning
countenance, losing their la-
bour, and ending their dayes
in want and pennrie? *There is*
(saith Salomon) that scattereth,
and is more increased; and there
is that spareth, and yet commeth
to pouerty. Againe, how many
men hauing gotten together
a rich estate of men exceeding
rich, haue beene brought to
extreme pouertie, yea, and
that sometimes very speedily?
Foras in the wheele the spoke
that is now vppward, is by and
by downward; so it commeth
to passe, that hee who is now
rich,

rich, doth shortly become
poore: Fire, Theeues, Warres,
and infinite other causes there
are of consuming riches, and
impouerishing their posses-
sors, albeit they had euen mil-
lions. But suppose that (con-
trarie to their nature) Riches
should stay by a man, yet hee
cannot stay with them, but
must leaue them. *The rich man
shall take away nothing when he
dyeth, neither shall his pompe
follow him: And againe, This
is an euill sicknesse, that a man
must retorne naked as he came:
and what profit hath the rich
man, that hee hath laboured for
the winde?*

8 Psal. 49.
17.

h Eccles 5.
15.

As Riches are vncertaine, so
are they insatiable. *Hee that
loueth siluer, shall not be satisfied
therewith, and he that loueth ri-
ches,*

3. In their
vnfatis-
blenesse.

i Eccle. 5.
2.

k 1. King.
21. 3, 4.

i Luke 12
16. 17, 18.

ches, shall bee without the fruit thereof. An example hereof we haue in *Ahab*, who was not satisfied with the riches of a Kingdome, but greedily coveted *Naboths* Vineyard: and in the rich man in the Gospel, who had filled all his Barnes, but could not fill his heart, *Luke 12.* and therefore resolved to enlarge them, that they might bee somewhat proportionable to his minde. A thing foolish, because impossible: for though they had beene neuer so large, and full, yet the capacitie of the heart beeing farre greater, hee would haue found it still empty, and vn-satisfied. Wealth and riches are like the Dropsie, in which disease, the more a man drinketh, the more hee thirsteth. Thus

it

it happeneth to the Rich man, as it doth to the Wasp, which being greedy of the Hony, at last falleth into the Barrell, so that she cannot get out. They are like *Tantalus* in the *Sygyian* Lake; and like the drudging *Indians*, which toyle in the golden Mines, but enioy none of the Oare.

Neither is wealth & riches onely vncertaine, and vnsatisfiable, but also altogether vnprofitable: so doth the Prophet *Samuel* call them, *Vaine things*, which cannot profit, for they are vaine. They cannot truly steed vs, either for the body or for the soule. Not for the bodie; for aske experience, Will wealth buy health? will it purchase ease, rest, or sleepe? Will it get a man a good stomake?

K 4

or

4. In their vnprofitableneffe.

m 1. Sam. 12.21.

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■ Psal. 49.
6.

● Luk. 12
15.

P Act. 10.

34.

9 Iam. 2. 5.

or any of those things which are lesse then any of these? Can it driue away the Gowt, the Strangurie, the Collicke, the Feuer, the Headach, or any other disease? Can it prolong a mans life, or free him from mortalitie? O no: for we see that rich men die as well as others: And though a man haue abundance, yet his life standeth not in his riches. Againe, wealth cannot profit the soule; for it cannot buy Faith, Repentance, the Spirit of God, or any thing else that is for the soules good. Can we purchase Heauen with mony? Can we buy grace for Jewels? Will God heare our prayers any whit the more for our outward meanes? O no: for *there is no respect of persons with God;*

God; he maketh more account of the poore of this world, who are rich in Faith, then of the wealthiest worldlings. Riches cannot free vs from the greatest evils : They cannot priuiledge any man from the stroke of Gods wrath : They cannot profit him in the day of Gods visitation : they cannot profit in the houre of death ; for what good will it bee to a man to haue heaped vp riches, when *God shall take away his soule*? They profit not after death; for then there will be no difference betweene the Rich, and the Poore ; the King, and the Begger ; betweene him that liued in plentie, and him that liued in miserie. Riches profit not at the Day of Iudgement ; for then

**Iob. 27. 8*

the Rich man shall bee examined, not how he hath flourished in the world, but how fruitfully he hath serued God: The great Iudge will regard not how rich men haue beene in goods, but in goodnesse: and all earthly wealth, without the spirituall riches at that day shalbe accounted as stolne goods, yea, the very *rust of the gold and siluer*, not beeing well implied in Gods seruice, will be a witnesse against the possessor.

¹Iam. 5.3.

5. In their dangers.

¹Eccl. 4.13.

Yet this is not all: for as worldly wealth is vncertaine, vn-satiablen, and vnprofitable; so likewise it is exceeding dangerous; *There is an euill sicknesse (saith Salomon) that I haue seen vnder the Sunne, to wit, Riches kept to the owners thereof for their*

their hurt. In which respect wealth may bee well likened vnto the Artichoke, which hath a little picking meate in it, not so wholesome, as delicious, more then the tenth part thereof is vnprofitable leaues; and besides, there is a coare in the middest of it, which will choake, not feede; strangle, not nourish, if it bee not warily picked away. It is like an headstrong and ouerlusty Horse, that casteth down the weake and vnskillfull Rider, to the breaking of his bones, if not of his necke. But wherein is it so dangerous? It is troublesome to the outward man, and like a lugging carriage, maketh him to sweat, and puffe, that goeth vnder it. *The rich mans*
plenty

^u Eccl. 5. 11

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Virgil Aeneid. 7.

Tu potes vnanimes armare in praelia fratres, atque odiis versare domos.

Chrysost. in Mat. hom. 91.

Ubi pecunie sunt, ibi inimicitiarum & mille contentionum est fundamentum.

x Mat. 13. 22.

plenty will not suffer him to sleepe. His variety of dishes bringeth him to surfetting, and to many noisome diseases: wealth and riches are the causes of enuies, enmities, and discords: They expose their owners to innumerable dangers; for they are the hoped hire, and intising baites, which encourage, and allure theeues, fladerers, & oppressors, to spy out all aduantages, & to bend all their policies to entrap vs. But yet this is not all; for Wealth and Riches doe much more endanger our spirituall estate. They are compared by our blessed Sauour, vnto Thornes: for as Thornes doe pierce & pricke those things that touch them, so doe riches pierce the hearts of the owners

ners thereof, beeing gotten with paines, kept with care, and lost with griefe : And as Thornes doe stop vp wayes, hinder the growth of Corne, and the path of passengers; so doe Riches hinder the growth of Grace, and stop vp the way of the Kingdome of Heauen, insomuch, that our Sauour Christ saith; *A rich man can hardly enter enter into the Kingdome of Heauen*; yea, to adde this vehemency to his speech, *It is easier for a Camell to goe thorow the eye of a Needle, then for a rich man to enter into the Kingdome of Heauen.* Wealth and Riches doe withdraw a mans heart from God : for *where the treasure is, therewill the heart be also.* They breed securitie, pride, and impenitency:

^a Mat. 19.
23, 24.

^b Mat. 6.
21, 24.

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tency. For when mans wayes
 prosper, the Iudgements of God
 (saith the Psalmist) are high a-
 boue their sight. They make a
 couenant with death, and with
 Hell are at agreement; yea, ri-
 ches make them spurn against
 the Lord: And in a word,
 They are the causes of all euill,
 so saith the Apostle; The de-
 sire of money is the roote of all e-
 uill (they being baites and al-
 lurements vnto all sorts of
 sinne) which whiles some haue
 coveted after, they haue erred
 from the Faith, & pierced them-
 selues thorow with many sor-
 rowes. Therefore the Apostle
 plainly telleth vs, that they
 who will be rich, fall into tempta-
 tion, and a snare, and into many
 foolish and hurtfull lusts, which
 drowne men in destruction and
 per-

^c Psal. 10. 6

^d Isay 28.

15.

^c Deut. 33.

12.

^f 1. Tim. 6.

10.

8. ver. 9.

perdition. And as riches are the causes of most sinnes, so they doe exceedingly aggrauate their sinnes, who by reason of the same, doe fall into sinne: for the greater the sinner is, the more benefits hee hath receiued, the greater is his sinne, and the more hainous the offence by such a one committed.

No maruell then though *Agur* heere is afraid of Riches, and prayeth against them, seeing they are not only so vaine, so vncertaine, and so vnprofitable, but also so dangerous and pernicious, both to the body and the soule. For what a dangerous thing is it to be a rich man? who heerein can well keepe himselfe vpright? And what will it profit a man to winne the whole world, and to lose

5. The vanity of men about riches.

^hMar. 8. 36

Webbe. G.

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Senec. Epist.
115.

lose his owne soule? By how much the more rather may we wonder at, and admire the folly and madnesse rather of the sonnes of men, who so earnestly gape after, and so eagerly pursue this worldly wealth? How many make this their chiefest aime, that they may bee rich? What inde fatigable paines doe most men take to compasse this? *Seneca* out of *Euripides*, doth notably describe the greedy humors of couetous wretches, postposing fame and honesty, and all to the purchase of wealth, bringing in the greedy worldling, thus speaking:

*Let me haue wealth
and riches to be giuing,
Account me then
the wretchedst miser liuing.*

All

All men inquire
 if He be rich or no:
 But no man learns
 what goodnesse He doth owe.
 They aske not why nor whence,
 but what thou hast,
 And only that:
 so each man is reputed,
 As he is landed,
 married, and suited.
 Askest thou me
 what's lothsome to possesse?
 Nothing; for getting
 doth disgrace redresse.
 Money the greatest good
 of humane braine:
 Full well dyes he,
 that living getteth gaine.

And in another place speaking the Dialect of a worldling; he describeth his humor thus:

Make me weake in Thigh and Hand,
 Make my feete infirme to stand,

Shake

Idem Epist.
 101.

Webbe. G.

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*Shake my teeth, and make them cracke,
Stoope my shoulders, bend my backe,
So that I may be rich, I care not,
Threaten torture, come and spare not.*

O wretched desires of carnall-minded men! What is it that they see in riches, that they should so much affect or desire them? Vassals & slaues are they vnto these earthly things. And the seruice which is performed to these worldly vanities, is tedious, tyrannicall, and full of trouble. They weary themselves in the way of wickednesse, and goe thorow dangerous wayes, but they care not to know the way of the Lord. Did wee consider the worthlesnesse of riches, we should more contemne them, then desire them; Did we wel weigh the dangers of them,

we

*Syracides
6.5.7,8.*

wee should be more afraid of them, then thus tyre out our selues as we doe in the pursuit of them.

CH A. 13.

First, whether Riches may bee affected. Secondly, in what respect, and how farre they may be desired. Thirdly, cautions to bee observed in this desire.

A GVR his Prayer against Riches, may moue a scruple, whether it be simply vnlawfull to possesse, or a sinne to desire riches? That it is lawfull to enioy wealth & riches, hath beene in part alreadie proued: They being in themselves (as hath beene shewed) the

1. Whether Riches may bee desired.

the good creatures of God; gifts and rewards from him vnto his seruants, and instruments, seruing to good and profitable purposes: and therefore they are not vtterly to be reiected, neither can they bee deemed in themselves vnlawfull to be possessed. That riches, in some sort may be desired, and sought after likewise, cannot bee denied. For the Apostle telleth vs, that *if there be any that provideth not for his owne, and namely, for them of his household; he denyeth the Faith, and is worse then an Infidell.* And the Patriarke Iacob teacheth vs a prouident care to trauel for *our own house*: yea, this care was in our blessed Saviour himselfe, who had a purse to keepe the mony for the

i 1.Tim.5.
8.

* Gen.30.
30.

! Iohn 13.
29.& 12.6.

the common store. And for the learning of this lesson, the vnthrifty man is sent by *Salomon*, vnto the Pismire, to take an example of prouidence, seeing that she in *Summer* prouideth foode for *Winter* : vvhich lesson who so practiseth, is called the sonne of Wisedome; *Prov. 10. 5.* Neither ought a man onely thus to provide for his charge, that hee may haue comfortable maintenance for himselfe whiles he liueth; but also that hee may leaue a competencie for his posteritie after he is dead: according to that of *Salomon* : A good man shall giue an inheritance to his childrens children, *Pro. 13. 22.* Neither doth *Agurs* Prayer any whit impugne this; nay, it doth confirme it: for

^m *Pro. 6. 6.*

ⁿ *Pro. 10. 5*

^o *Pro. 13. 22.*

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¶ Pro. 30. 8

2. In what respect, & how farre riches may be desired.

¶ Aēt. 20
35.

¶ 2. Cor. 12
14.

for though he pray against superfluity; yet hee prayeth for sufficiency; *Feede me with food convenient for me.*

It is lawfull then to desire sufficient plenty of riches, if we propose these the ends of this our desire. 1. That thereby wee haue of our owne, through the blessing of God, whereby we may liue comfortably, and cheerefully in our Vocation, without being burthensome vnto others; for it is *a more blessed thing to giue, then to receiue.* 2. That thereby we may the better educate and bring vp our children, & family, & may lay vp somewhat for them against that time that the Lord take vs away frō them; for Parents are bound to lay vp for their children, 2. Cor.

12. 14.

12. 14. 3. That wee may bee
 the better inabled therby to be
 liberally helpfull, and benefi-
 ciall vnto others, and aduance
 both the publike, & the priuat
 good; priuate, by plentifull
 relieuing of the poore, and do-
 ing the workes of Mercy;
 publike, when we may haue
 either for the good of the
 Church, in maintaining the
 Ministerie, and setting for-
 ward all meanes of Gods ser-
 uice, or for the good of the
 Commonwealth; when as we
 may haue wherewithall to pay
 tribute, scot and lot, and to
 performe such publike serui-
 ces as shall be required at our
 hands. In this respect we may
 pray for riches; not that wee
 may drinke the water of *our*
owne cisterne our selues, but that
our

Pro. 5. 15
 16.

Webbe. G.

25155

Our fountaines also may flow forth, and our rivers of waters may runne into the streets.

3. Cauti-
ons to bee
observed
in this
desire.

Yet we are to be exceeding warie in these our desires, lett our desires range abroad beyond their lawfull limits: And to this end wee must obserue these cautions.

* Phil. 3. 8.

1. We must not ouer-value riches in our iudgements aboue their worth; but remembering that howsoever they are good in their owne nature, yet they are not absolutely good, but of an indifferent nature, no better then drosse and dung, in respect of Christ and his benefits.

2. Wee must not immoderately affect them; wee must not participate with worldlings in that greedy desire of becom-

b
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Sauio
pray,

becomming rich : *They that will be rich* (that is, they who are ouergreedy vpon wealch) *fall into temptations and snares, and into many foolish and noisome lusts*, 1.Tim.6.9. And the wiseman telleth vs, that *he that maketh haste to be rich, shall not bee innocent*, Pro.28.20. And a little after; *A man with a wicked eye hasteth to riches, and knoweth not that pouertie shall come vpon him*. And in another place; *An heritage hastily gotten at the beginning, the end thereof shall not be blessed*.

Thirdly, we must not affect or desire superfluitie; for our Prophet heere doth pray against that; and our blessed Sauour hath taught vs to pray, not for abundance, but

L

for

^u1.Tim.6.
9,10.

x Pro.28.
20.22.

y Pro.20.
21.

a Mat.6.

Webbe. G.

25155

for our daily bread : that is, such necessities & competent store as may bee conuenient for vs : Desire of abundance and superfluities, doth not suite with a Christian heart. First, because this desire doth exceede the measure of those ends, for which riches are good. Secondly, It argueth a kinde of diffidence or distrust in God. Thirdly, It is a throwing of our selues into temptation : for abundance (as already hath beene declared) is a notable temptation and snare of the diuell, whereby he draweth vs from the loue of God, and fastneth many euils vpon vs ; Therefore we who desire to be *delivered from temptation*, are not wilfully and desirously to rush

^b Mat. 6.
13.

rush into the same.

Fourthly, We must not affect or desire the goods and riches of other Men. The Commandement runneth thus; *Thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbours.* There is nothing more vaine then a greedy eye:

*Alasse, how all in vaine shalt thou
Behold anothers mightie Mow!*

Fifthly, All our wishes and desires must bee submitted vnto the will of God; wee must no farther desire these outward meanes then is agreeable vnto Gods will: In euery thing making this the motto of our requests; *Nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done.*

^c Ex. 20.
17.

Senec. de
benif. lib. 7.
cap. 5.

CH A. 14.

Cautions about, First, the acquisition. Secondly, possession. Thirdly, distribution of Riches.

Cautions.

THat wee may haue the more right vnto our goods, and the more lawfull vse of wealth and riches ; A threefold caution is to be obserued of vs. First, concerning the manner of our getting Riches. Secondly, in regard of their possession. Thirdly, for thejr vse and administration. For the first, if wee would haue comfort in our Riches, wee must see that they be well gotten ; for il-gotten goods are not warrantable,

rantable, and therefore cannot bee comfortable. And that our riches may be compassed aright, we may obserue these rules:

First, That wee liue in a lawfull calling, and not get our Wealth by Vsurie, Playing, Gaming, or other such like vnlawfull courses, condemned both by the Law of God and Man.

Ascon. Pedian. in 2. li. Ciceronis de diuinat.

Secondly, Wee must not get our Wealth by encroaching vpon other mens callings; *Let every man abide in that calling wherein he was called,* 1. Cor 7. 20.

c 1. Cor. 7. 20.

Thirdly, In a lawfull calling, we must vse only lawfull meanes to attaine vnto our Wealth and Riches; wee must auoid violence, oppression,

f 1. Thes.
4.6.

sion, extortion, false weights and measures, together with all fraudulent and circumventing courses; *Let no man goe beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter: for the Lord is the auenger of all such,* 1. Thess. 4. 6.

2. For the
possession
of them.

In the next place, for the right possession of Riches, that when we haue well gotten them, we may warrantably keepe them; we are to obserue these rules:

5 1. Cor. 3.
22, 23.

First, wee are to looke to our selues, that our persons be regenerate; for if we be not in Christ, we haue no title to his goods, but intrude vpon them by vsurpation: If wee continue vnregenerate and defiled in our sinnes, we shall taint those blessings of God,
and

and turne them into sinne.

Secondly, when we haue those blessings of God in our possession, that we may possesse them aright; we must labour to haue them sanctified vnto vs by the Word and Prayer, according to the rule of the Apostle, 1.Tim.4.4. *Euery Creature of God is good, being sanctified by the Word and Prayer* : By the Word, as it doth shew and warrant the right vse thereof, so as it may be done in faith : By Prayer, as it is a meanes to deriue Gods blessing vpon it, and the assistance of his holy spirit, whereby wee may be the better enabled to vse it aright.

Thirdly, we must returne the praise of them vnto God,

ⁿ1.Tim.4.
4.

Webbe, G.

acknowledging that whatsoever the means haue been, that he is the chiefe and principall cause of all the benefits which wee doe enioy. When we therefore haue the blessings of God in our possession, we may not *sacrifice to our owne merits*, or ascribe the hauing of them to our owne merit, wit, or labour, seeing, that notwithstanding all the paines and policie that wee can vse, if Gods blessing bee not added, wee can neuer thriue. Therefore, wee must be mindfull to returne the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving vnto God the giuer, according as hee requireth, Deut. 8. 10. *When thou hast eaten and filled thy selfe, thou shalt blesse the Lord God, for the good land*

i Hab. 2.
13.

k Ps. 127.
1. 2.

l Heb. 3.
15.

m Deut 8.
10.

land which hee hath giuen thee.
And againe, a little after, the
same charge is renued, lest we
should forget it ; *Beware, lest*
thou say in thine heart, My po-
wer and the might of my hand
hath gotten me this wealth ; But
thou shalt remember the Lord
thy God, for it is he that giveth
the power to get wealth.

n ver. 17.
18.

Fourthly, when wee haue
Wealth and Riches in our
possession, we must not haue
our hearts and affections fix-
ed on the same. *If Riches in-*
crease, set not your heart vpon
them, Psal. 62. 10. Vpon
which words, excellently
writeth *Augustine ; The A-*
postle saith not, See that ye haue
no Riches, but, Doe not set your
hearts vpon Riches ; Hee doth
not condemne riches, but the doo-

o Psal. 62.
10.

August. ibid.

*Ille qui non
habet, non
an:biat: Qui
habet, non
superbiat.*

*ting vpon riches : Hee then that
hath not these riches, let him not
couetously seeke them : Hee that
hath them, let him not be proud
of them.*

Fifthly, whatsoeuer wee
haue in our possession, be it
little, or be it much, we must
rest contented with it, as be-
ing the portion allotted vnto
vs, and not repine against
Gods prouidence, because we
haue not a larger allowance.
A notable example: whereof
we haue in *Iob* : *Who reioiced
not, when his substance was
great, neither was much grie-
ued when it was impaired.*
But of this contentation,
more at large in another
place.

*p Iob 31.
25.*

*9 Iob. 1.
21.*

As we haue scene directi-
ons for the lawfull getting
and

and rightfull possession of riches : so now, let vs take a view of the right vse thereof in their disposing and bestowing. And this hath a twofold reference. First, To the owners themselves. Secondly, To others.

3. For the disposing & bestowing of our Riches.

The vse which concerneth the owners themselves, is, that they imploy their riches to the good preservation, defence and comfort of themselves, according to their person, estate and calling; for to what end doth God bestow these meanes vpon vs, but that we should enioy them to our comfort? *I know* (saith *SALOMON*) *that there is no good in these things, but for a man to enioy them, and also that every man should eat and drinke,*

Eccl. 12. 12, 13.

¹ Eccles.
5.18.

drinke, and enioy the good of all his labour, this is the gift of God. And againe, Behold what I haue scene; It is good and comely for one to eate and to drinke, and to enioy the good of all his labour that hee taketh vnder the Sunne, all the daies of his life: for this is his portion. Against this, there is a twofold offence. First, In sordidous Tenacitie. Secondly, In wastfull prodigalitie. In the former kinde, they offend, who out of a wretched disposition do defraud themselues of the vse of their owne goods, and goe with naked backs and emptied bellies, that they may the sooner fill their chests; wanting that which they haue, & carkingly gathering not to enioy what they haue gathered,

gathered, but that they may leaue it to their heires; dealing herein like miserable cookes, dressing curious dainties for other men, whereon they will riot and surfet, and yet themselues being pinched with hunger, either cannot, or dare not lick their owne fingers. In the latter kinde, They offend, who spend the blessings of God lauishly and aboue their abilitie, and thereby bring themselues to want and miserie; As the former hath not that which he hath; so the other will not haue it long: Both sorts egregious theeues: The one robbing himselfe; This, other men: Both ill stewards in the imployment of those outward meanes, which God
for

for their comfort hath giuen vnto them.

Secondly, The lawfull imployment of our Wealth in respect of others, is twofold. First, Publike. Secondly, Priuate. Publike, when we bestow it for the good of the Church, and Commonweale. The vses which concerne the good of the Church, are, that we bestow our Riches for the maintenance of the meanes of Gods publike seruice, vpon those who teach and instruct vs in the knowledge of God, and vpon the places of Gods worship, and necessities belonging thereunto : which the Lord requireth, and encourageth vs to the performance thereof, by a gracious promise of reward. Pro. 3.9,

10. Honour the Lord with thy riches, and with the first fruits of thine increase: so shall thy barnes be filled with abundance, and thy presses shall burst with new wine. Vses which concerne the good of the Common-wealth, are Tributes, Customes, Subsidies, Beneuolences, and other such like expenses for the supporting of the estate Regall, the defence of our Countrie in time of warre, the maintenance of Vniuersities, Schooles, and Hospitals, and such other publike seruices, whereby the good of the Commonwealth is aduanced.

The Priuate disposing of our goods, is that which is bestowed to the vse of priuate persons, in lending to the

† Pro. 3. 9,
10.

u Mat. 22.
21.

x Rom. 13
6, 7.

• Ps. 112. 5

^b Deut. 15
8.

^c Isay 58.
7, 8.

the needie, and releiuing and succouring those that are in necessitie : Both which are enioyned by the Lord, Deut. 15. 8. *Thou shalt open thy hand wide vnto thy poore brother, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his needes, in that which hee wanteth. And to this, the Lord hath promised an especiall blessing, Isay 58. 7, 8. If thou deale thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poore that are cast out, to thy house; when thou seest the naked, if thou cower him, and hide not thy selfe from thine owne flesh; then shall thy light breake forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall goe before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.*

CH A. 15.

*The excellencie of a meane and
middle estate, aboue a rich
and eminent.*

*Feede me with Foode
conuenient for me.*

WE are now past the
two dāgerous rocks,
the Scylla and Charibdis of
Pouertie and Riches, both
which our Pilot *Agur* see-
keth to eschew : wee haue
seene the danger of them
both : how Pouertie pinch-
eth, Riches puffe vp ; Pouer-
tie breedeth cares, Riches
make carelesse ; Pouertie dis-
ableth

A trans-
ition to
the affir-
matieue
part.

Webbe, G.

ableth from doing good;
 Riches allure to euill deeds.
 Come we now from the Ne-
 gatiue part of *Agurs* prayer
 vnto the Affirmatiue; from
 what he doth pray against, to
 what he doth desire; *Nor po-
 uertie, nor Riches; what then?
 A competencie; Feede me with
 food conuenient for me.*

The main
 substance
 of it.

Where, before we come to
 trace the words of the Text,
 as they lye in order, we will
 take a view of the maine sub-
 stance or intent of the same;
 which is to preferre a meane
 or middle estate, before any
 other whatsoeuer.

A meane
 or middle
 estate.

A meane or middle estate,
 I call that which is neither
 too euinent, nor too obscure;
 neither too rich, nor too
 poore; neither too high, nor
 too

too low ; neither too prosperous, nor too aduerse ; But which can beare it selfe with an even saile; aboue cōtempt, below enuie ; free from want, farre from superfluitie.

That such a meane or middle estate, is to be preferred before the greatest prosperitie, may euidently appeare, not only by this wisd of *Agur*, and by the like esteeme of holy men of God, *Mcob*, *Dauid*, *Iob*, *Ieremie*, and diuers others recorded in holy Scripture ; but also by the testimonie of the very heathens themselves, who were onely led by the light of Nature : *Socrates*, *Crates*, *Cato*, *Lælius*, *Lucilius*, with many more renowned Ethnicks, chose rather to liue a priuate retired life,

The best estate.

d Pro.3.7.

e Genes.

28.20.

f Il.84.10.

g Iob 29.

h Ierem.

45.5.

Senec. ep. 39

life, then to enioy publike honours, and rather solaced themselves with a sufficiencie vnto their necessaries, then by seeking after superfluities; It is (saith Seneca) the proper-
 tie of a great minde, to contemne great things, and to desire sufficiencie and mediocritie, rather then abundance and superfluitie, for those are permanent and profitable, the other hurtfull; So too much ranknesse laieth the Corne; so boughes overladen are quickly broken; and too much fruit-
 fulnesse seldome cometh to ripenesse: The same happeneth (saith he) to mens mindes, which superfluitie weakeneth, as well as miserie blasteth. This was Horace his counsell vnto his friend Lycinius:

Horat. Od.
 10. l. b. 2.

My

My friend, If thou wouldst liue well,
these rules keepe,
Lanch not too farre into the boyling deepe;
Saile not too nie the neere adioyning shore,
Fearing the stormes; go euen & no more.
The golden mean who loveth best to proue,
Shall liue in quiet most, and not remoue,
He needs not feare the enuy of the Court,
Nor want of means to bring about his port.

And Oedipus in the tragedie
proposeth this, as the
sweetest and safest course of
liuing, wishing this aboue all
others :

If I were now to chuse
A life fit for my minde,
All else I would refuse,
Sauie this of middle kinde:
Sayle sutable to flie,
Soft gale of winde to blow,
I would not flye too high,
I would not sinke too low.

And to the same effect, Bo-
etius

Rectius vi-
ues Lycini,
neq; altum
semper vr-
gendo, neq;
dum procel-
las cautus
horrescis, ni-
mium pre-
mendo lit-
tus iniquum.
Aurea quis-
quis medio-
critatem
diligat, tutus
caret obso-
leti sordibus
lecti, caret
inuidenda
sobrius aula.
Seneca in
Oedip.
Fata si lice-
at mihi fin-
gere arbitrio
meo tempe-
rem Zephiro
leui vela,
&c.

etius in his counsels and politike discourses, writeth thus:

Boet. metro.

4. lib. 2.

*Quisquis
volet peren-
nem cautus
ponere sedē,
&c.*

*whoſo would line a marie life,
From ſorrow, care, and danger free,
Let him auoid the worldly ſtrife,
For wealth and vaine proſperitie.
Let him not build vpon the hils,
Nor yet vpon the waſhie ſand,
Leſt he doe fall againſt his will,
Or finde no meanes to ſtay his hand.*

The rea-
ſons why
a meane
eſtate is to
be prefer-
red before
any other.

That a meane eſtate is to be preferred before any other, it is apparent. Firſt, becauſe it is moſt free from danger, as not being ſo low to be trodden vpon ; nor ſo high as to be ſeated in the eye of enuie: not ſo weake, as to lye open to oppreſſion ; nor ſo mighty, as to bee made the marke of harme : for as the low ſhrubs are made the prey of beaſts to brouze vpon, and the ordinary

dinary fuell of the fire : And the highest trees are most subiect to lightning and thunder, and exposed to the violence of euery tempest ; whereas the Trees of middle growth are free from both these dangers : so they who are in the lowest estate of po- uerty, are often oppressed with wrong and iniury: They who are placed in the high top of worldly prosperity, are made more obnoxious to the rage of superior powers, being either had in iealousie for their greatnesse, or in respect of their abundance: a fit bootie to seaze vpon. Only the mean estate is most free from these extreme perils, as being below enuie, and aboue contempt. Secondly, this
meane

i Iob. 12. 5

meane estate is therefore more to be desired, seeing it preserveth vs from forgetfulness of God, irreligion and profanenesse, which accompanieth prosperitie, and from the vse of vnlawfull meanes to maintaine our estate; and from impatency, murmuring and repining against God, to which we are tempted in povertie and aduersitie.

A Confirmation by induction.

k Jerem.
45.5.

l Ps. 37. 1.

They therefore are much too blame, whose aspiring thoughts affect greatnesse, and either enuy those who haue a great share in these worldly things, or greedily hunt after them themselves: for why should wee enuy others that are more eminent then our selues, in place, in honours, wealth and riches; seeing

seeing that all worldly things
are meere vanities, when as all
honours, and dignities are but
shaddowes and momentanie
Titles; when as power and
authority, is but an ouer-great
saile ready to ouerturne vs,
and the greater our place is,
the greater is our care & trou-
ble; when as the fairest build-
ings of the world are but
heapes of stones; and gold in it
selfe, but the dregges of the
earth; when as the richest in
apparell are not so cloathed as
the Lillies of the field; when
as crownes do but load the
Head with cares, and King-
domes are but seruices vnto
their seruants? O how slippe-
rie are the places of great mens
standings! How inconstant
popular applauses! How mu-

M table

^m Eccl. 1. 2
ⁿ Isay. 29.
9.

*Gregor. Mo-
ral. li. i. c. i.
Potestas cul-
minis tem-
pestas men-
tis.*

o Mat. 6.
29.

p Psal. 73.
18.

q Aet. 28.

r Psal. 146.

3, 4.

Antigonus
apud Stobe.
49.

1. Cor. 7.

table Princes fauours? Yea, how weighty & burdensome to it selfe is soueraignty it selfe? Which made the Hea-then Monarch to protest vnto one who admired his happi- nesse, & measured his inward comfort and content by his outward glory: *If (saith hee) thou didst know with how many evils this Diadem were reple- nished, thou wouldst not take it up, though thou foundest it vpon a dunghill.* And why should we affect Greatnesse? Seeing hee that hath most Authoritie ouer others, hath least in ruling himselfe; or why should wee desire to abound in wealth & riches? seeing riches are so full of feares, and cares. *The figure of this world (saith the Apostle) doth fade away; inti- mating*

mating thereby vnto vs (as *Chrysostome* doth obserue) that all worldly things are but in shew and figure onely; and like a shadow or a dreame which vanish away, hauing nothing in them substantiall. How childish therefore (saith he) is that minde which respecteth shadowes, and is proud of dreames, fixing it selfe vpon that which soone after shall passe away?

Chrys. hom.
35. in Gen.

If then our good God hath beene so gracious vnto vs, as to giue vs a conuenient competency in these outward matters, though our meanes be but small; our places but obscure; yet let vs reckon the lines to haue falne vnto vs in a pleasant place, and that wee haue a goodly heritage. The lesse our Place, our Power,

A conclu-
sion.

Psal. 16. 6

M 2

our

Webbe, G.

*Quid de tris.
lib. 3.*

*Qui cadit
in plano
(vix hoc ta-
men euenit
ipsum) Sic
cadit ut tac-
ta surgere
possit humo.*

our reccits are, the lower
will be our account: the safer
our course of life: the more
free from inward and out-
ward dangers: the lesse wee
doe enioy, the lesse wee haue
to lose: the fewer are our
enemies, the more free from
temptations: the lower wee
are to ground, the firmer are
wee from falling; or if we
fall, the more easie it
will be to rise vp
again.

CHAP.

CHAP. 16.

First, Gods providence. Secondly, Natures indigence. Thirdly, what is enough. Fourthly, the reason why the Lord doth allot a greater measure of these earthly things to some, then he doth to others.

*Feede mee with foode
conuenient, &c.*

BUt let vs sift a little more narrowly the words themselves of this affirmatiue in *Agurs Prayer*; *Feede mee with foode conuenient for mee; Feede me.* There is the Author. *With Foode.* There is the meanes. *Conuenient.* There is the Qualitie. *For me.* There is the moitie. The first of these

The Text
explained.

pointeth at Gods Prouidence, who is the feeder of vs. The second, at Natures Indigence, who desireth onely to be fed. The third, at the benefit of saccietie, that we haue enough, when we haue what is conuenient. The fourth, at the seuerall order and maner of Gods disposing these his temporall blessings; to some in greater, to others, in lesser measure: of all which in order.

1. Gods Prouidence for mans preservation.

^h Psal. 145.

15, 16.

^b Psal. 107

Feed me. As our being, so the meanes of our living doth depend vpon Gods Prouidence: he must feede vs, wee cannot feede our selues. *The eyes of all waite vpon him; He giveth them their meate in due season: Hee openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing. Hee satisfieth the long-*

longing soule, and filleth the hungry with goodnesse; He watereth the Hills from his chambers, the earth is satisfied with the fruit of his workes; He causeth the grasse to grow for the Cattell, and Hearbe for the service of Man, that he may bring forth foode out of the earth, and Wine that maketh glad the heart of Man, and oile to make his face shire, and bread which strengtheneth mans heart. Wee may not therefore rely vpon our selues, nor sacrifice to our owne net, nor burne incense to our dragge; as if thereby our portion were fat, or our meate plenteous. For it is but a vaine thing to rise vp early, and to sit vp late, to labour and toyle with all our industry, if the blessing of God bee not

^c Psal. 104.
13, 14, 15.

^d Hab. 1. 16

^e Psal. 126
2.

M 4 vpon

f Mat 6.
26, 28.

3 Rom. 3.
32.

h Hob. 13. 5

vpōn our labours. To him
muſt we looke vp, vpōn his
prouidence muſt we rely for
euery thing that wee doe, or
would enioy. Neither are wee
to diſtruſt his Prouidence for
any of theſe outward meanes;
hee that cloatheth the very
Grasse of the fields, and feedeth
the Fowles of the aire, ſhall hee
not much more prouide for
for vs, for whoſe ſake the reſt
were made? He is a God, and
therefore able; a Father, and
therefore willing to ſupply
our neceſſities: hee who hath
giuen vnto vs his Sonne; and
that, when wee were his ene-
mies; can hee deny vnto vs
now reconciled any thing
that is good for vs? hee hath
promiſed that *hee will not faile*
vs nor forſake vs. Shall we truſt
him

him in the maine, and not in the by? If wee first seeke the Kingdome of God and his righteousness, all outward things shall be administred vnto vs; so farre forth as shall be good for vs. O then rely vpon God, who is infinite in Power, in Wisdom, and in loue towards vs, and no lesse true in the performance, then he is gracious in his promises, being Truth it selfe, who cannot deceiue. Lay aside therefore carking care, and rest wholly vpon him with contentation of minde, whatsoeuer the estate be in which we are.

Neither indeede doth our Nature desire much; *Feede me with foode*, saith Agur; he desireth not large Reuenues and Possessions; store of flockes

M 5

and

i Mat. 6. 35

2. Natures indigency

Webbe, G.

Sen. ad Hel-
niam. c. 5.

k Gen. 28.
20.

1 1. Tim. 6.
4.

and Cattell, sumptuous Houses, gay Cloathes, varietie of Dignities and Honors, plenty of Gold and Siluer, and such like; but *Ale me cibo*; *Feede mee with foode*; Nature it selfe (had we no other guide) doth teach vs to be content with a little; Nature (saith Seneca) hath so disposed things, that to live well, wee haue not neede of many necessaries. Foode and raiment are the onely necessities for this life (I meane the preservation of it) we stand in neede of. If God will bee with me (saith Iacob) and keepe mee in this way that I goe, and will giue mee bread to eat; and raiment to put on, that is all which hee doth require. And the Apostle, 1. Tim. 6. 4. If we haue foode and raiment, let vs bee there-

therewith content : For what neede we more then to feede the belly , and to cloath the backe ? Hitherto tend all our earthly labours, and industries, according to that of the Wise man : *Eccles. 6. 7. All the labour of man is for his mouth.*

^mEccl. 6. 7

O that we were wise to consider this ; how small a debt we owe to Nature, who is no vnreasonable Creditor, but satisfied with a little, if we giue it not what we may, but what we owe ! Whence then commeth that immoderate care of heaping vp these worldly vanities ? How commeth it to passe, that *Martha*-like wee encumber our selues , and are troubled about many things, whiles in the meane while we neglect (*Maries better choise*)
that

ⁿLuk. 10
41, 42.

● Hab. 2. 6.

r 1. Sam.
12. 21.

that *unum necessarium*, that one and only necessary thing? What compassing of Sea and Land? What toile and drudgerie is there yndertaken by the sons of men, to lade themselves with thicke Clay? What gadding and madding after toys and trifles? What turning aside after vaine things vvhich cannot profite nor deliuer, for they vaine? What a difference is there betweene the vnmeasurable greedinesse of mans appetite, and the small sacietie of Natures necessitie? *Whereas* (saith Innocentius) in the beginning mans life was preserved by water, and bread; now the Glutton is not satisfied with the fruits of the Trees, nor the pulse of the Field, nor with the rootes of Hearbs, nor with the
fish

fish of the Sea, nor with the beasts of the Land, nor with the Birds of the Aire. Adam our first Parent was contented with a garment of Fig-leaves to cover his nakednesse. But wee vwill scarcely bee pleased with the rarest and richest workmanship that Art or Nature can afford, to cover our sinfull bodies: Wee feede not our bellies alone, but also our eyes and our eares: and in our cloathing we regard more the fashion, then the vse; varietie of brauery, more then the habit of decencie, or couering for necessitie. Thus did not *Agur*; he desireth but foode, and that not of the daintiest viands, nor in great varietie, but *Foode convenient*.

Gen. 3. 7.

Enough (as wee say in our com-

3. Enough should suffice.

Webbe, G.

Luke 12
15.

chrys. in gen.
hom. 37.

common Prouerbe) is as good
as a Feast; Nay, it is better then
a feast; for that may breede a
furtet; this, facietie. That may
glut vs: That will refresh vs. *A
mans life consisteth not in the a-
bundāce of the things that he pos-
sesseth.* It is not varietie of dain-
ty dishes, nor multiplicitie of
change of sutes; nor superflui-
tie of wealth and riches that
can make a man the better, or
life the sweeter: hee that hath
the most, can take but his
share, the rest he shall leaue be-
hinde; he who hath sufficien-
cie, wanteth nothing; and hee
who wanteth nothing, is a-
boue all others truely rich.

But heere will be the diffi-
culty how wee may know
when it is sufficient, or when
we haue enough: Euerie word
may

may bee defined, and euery thing may bee measured. But this enough (in a worldlings conceit) cannot bee measured, nor defined. It changeth vpon euery occasion: when we had nothing, we thought it enough, if wee might obtaine lesse then we haue; when wee came to more, we thought of another enough; now vwee haue more then that, we cannot thinke yet enough. Surely flesh and bloud cannot bee an Arbitrator sufficient to decide this point of sufficiencie: But wee must goe into the Sanctuary of God, and there wee shall finde out, what is enough, namely, *Agurs* description of it here, *Dimensum nostrum*, that which is conuenient for vs. Feede mee
with

^cPsal.73.
17.

Webbe, G.

with foode conuenient for me.

^e1. Pet. 5. 7

^uRom. 8.
28.

That is enough for vs,
which God hath allotted vnto
vs, be it little, or bee it much.
For God our good God, like a
most prouident Father, doth
take an especiall care for vs; he
in his all-seeing wisdom
knoweth what is fittest for vs,
and how-euer it be, whether
in want, or plenty; *All things*
worke together for good to them
that loue God. Whatsoeuer
therefore our estate and con-
dition is, wee may safely con-
clude, that is best, because it is
most conuenient for vs. Wee
are not then so much to looke
vvhath others haue, but vvhath
is fit for vs to haue, *What is*
conuenient for mee, as *Agur*
speaketh. For that may bee
conuenient for one, which is

not

not for another. Almighty God doth diuersly dispose of these his earthly blessings; to some he giueth more, to others lesse; some haue a full portion of the; others, are more scantied in the same. To some of his children he giueth a greater measure of earthly things; to others a smaller: to the worst, many times of these common blessings, hee doth vouchsafe the greater measure.

This seemeth a sore eye-sore to flesh & bloud. It hath made the hearts of many of Gods dearest children to faint within them; when they haue seene the prosperitie of vicked men, and how farre short their share hath beene in comparison of them in these outward meanes. Rebellious Nature

4. Why the Lord doth allot a greater measure of earthly meanes to some then to other.
x Psal. 73.
16.

^a Ro.9.28.

ture will be ready to obieſt ; Why ſhould God giue ſuch a large portion to his enemies, and ſo ſmall a pittance to his ſeruants ? Others abound and flow in vvealth ; Why ſhould I be thus kept vnder with penury, and want ? But who art thou, O Man, that thus diſputeſt with God ? Shall the Pot ſay to the Potter, *Why haſt thou made me thus?* Were there no other reaſon ; Gods ſole will were ſufficient to ſatisfie vs herein ; ſeeing they are his free and vnderſerued gifts, which hee may iuſtly beſtow where he pleaſeth. For may not hee doe with his owne what he will ? Or is our eye euill, becauſe he is good ? Is it not enough for vs to bee ſeruants of his Family, vnleſſe
we

we be Stewards, and chiefe Officers? Should wee not rather bee thankfull for those many benefits which we haue receiued, then repine because we haue not receiued all? doth it not suffice vs that wee are made partakers of his chiefest iewels, and are adopted sons and heires of an eternall patrimonie, vnlesse wee haue also seruants wages, and a large share in earthly trifles?

Yet know further for thy satisfaction in this point, who-soeuer thou art that stumblest at it: First, that the Lord is no niggard in his gifts; his bounty was such, that if the fault had not been our owne, by falling into sinne, we might haue beene partakers of all. It is well for vs, though for a while

while we haue not both, that the better part is restored vn- to vs. Secondly, the wise- dome of God doth appeare in this different distribution of these earthly things. All men are not of the like nature and temper; one mans foode may bee anothers poison; one mans raising, anothers ruine. Therefore the Lord, like a wise Physician, doth not giue the same Phy- sicke to all patients, nor in the same proportion; but fitteth it in quantitie, and qua- litie to euery ones neede, gi- uing one pills to purge him; to another cordials to reuiue him; to one sawces to quic- ken his appetite; to an- other Abstinence for a cure.

Thirdly, it agreeth vvith
Gods

Gods iustice, and for the preserving of humane societie it is necessarie, that there should bee some of meane qualitie, as vvell as honorable; some poore, as well as rich; some weake, as well as strong: for where should any order appeare, if there were altogether a paritie? If all were rich, where should bee exercised the worke of charitie?

Let vs then well consider vvith our selues not so much vvhat others haue, as what is fit for vs to haue; for why should wee enuie others, or repine that vvee are not so rich as others? vvhat haue wee deserued at Gods hands that hee should preferre vs? What haue wee that we haue not

not receiued? Why should wee desire more, vwhen as whatsoeuer we haue already, it is much more then we doe deserue? What if God would first humble vs, before hee would exalt vs?

This world, wee know, was not made for our Paradise; why should wee not be content vvith patience, and cheerefulnesse, here to suffer a little want, that hereafter wee may haue fulnesse; heere to endure misery, that hereafter vvee may finde ioy; heere to passe by ignominy, that hereafter vvee may receiue the crowne of glorie? Excellent is the saying of the golden-mouth'd Father to this purpose; *If (saith hee) Wee know that for the care and*
loue

Chrys. hom.
29. in 1. cor.
12.

loue which God beareth vnto vs, hee hath giuen vnto vs that which wee haue; let vs know also, that in the same care, and loue, hee hath measured vnto vs our proportion, how much it was conuenient for vs to haue, which should make vs reioyce in those things which wee haue receiued; and not breake out into impatiencie, because something that wee desire, is withheld from vs.

Si nesci
quod propter
curam quam
de nobis
habuit De-
us, nobis
largitus est
illud quoq;
intelligas,
quod propter
eandem cu-
ram mensu-
ram tribuit,
&c.

CHA.

Webbe. G.

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CHAP. 17.

First, the excellencie of true contentation. Secondly, the meanes to attaine unto it. First, Negative, what will not Secondly, affirmatiue, what will bring content.

The excellency of Contentation.

^c 1. Tim. 6. 6.

^d Ioh. 4. 13

Godlineffe (saith the Apostle) is great riches, with contentation: Loe heere, a new kinde of riches (which the world neuer thought of) and these of such a nature, that they will satisfie a man like the water that Christ our Sauour spake of: *Iohn 4. 13. He that drinketh of this water, shall thirst no more.* This vvealth is Godlineffe, and the companion of Godlineffe, is Contentation; which whosoeuer doth enioy,

enjoy (none can enjoy it but the godly) hee hath little need of riches, hauing a *Quietus est* against all care, & feare. There is no wealth to true content; such a commander it is, that wheresoeuer it setteth foote, a thousand blessings wait vpon it. In euery disease it is a Physician; in euery strife, a Lawyer; in euery doubt, a Preacher; in euery griefe, a Comforter. It maketh v rich, without riches: vvhole, without health; warme, without cloathes, and merry in our greatest cause of heauinesse: For so the Wise man speaketh,

There is that maketh himselfe rich, and hath nothing, and that maketh himselfe poore, hauing great riches. For though a man had all things else, if hee did

N

want

• Pro. 13. 7

Webbe, G.

want this content, it vvere nothing worth, seeing the want of this, would turne all his peace to trouble; all his riches, into pouertie; all his libertie, into seruitude; all his plenty, into penury. How poore is he, who is in continuall vwant? And what doth hee but vwant continually, who is in continuall feare of vwanting? On the contrarie side, where the minde is content; there is a supply of outward meanes, with inward comforts. It turneth our trouble into peace; our pouertie, into vwealth; our seruitude, into liberty; our sorrowes into solace; and whiles we seeme poore, it causeth vs that we be not poore indeede, but onely in appearance, seeing that hereby

^f 1. Cor. 6.
10.

hereby we haue a secret rich-
es which the world taketh no
notice of, which in want ma-
keth vs not to want, and
whiles wee haue nothing, to
possesse all things: The rea-
son heereof is alledged by the
Philosopher; Because a con-
tented mind borroweth whatse-
uer it wanteth, of it selfe; for ha-
uing little, it desireth no more,
desiring nothing, it wanteth no-
thing, and Hee that wanteth
nothing, is of all others most
rich.

Sen.ep.119

O then, how earnestly should
our hearts affect, our affectiōs
desire, our desires seeke after
this rich treasure & sweet plea-
sure of contentation. This will
make vs scorne all earthly va-
nities, and quit vs quite from
the slavery and misery of

8 Iob. 1. 22

k 1. King.

21. 4.

2. The
meanes to
attaine
vnto con-
tentation.

earthly appetites. This findeth that which all the world seeketh, & without this, none can finde enough. This filleth all our emptinesse, futeeth with all our callings, fitteth vs to all purposes: And as it is a treasure farre surpassing all earthly commodities, so it is a commodity which cannot bee taken from vs. Thus Saran, when he tooke away all *Iobs* goods, could not depriue him of this good; whereas *Abab* wanting this, could not be satisfied with a whole Kingdome: wherefore seeing contentation is a treasure so precious, that with it; no estate, without it, all estates are miserable, let vs labour with all our might to attaine vnto it.

But how shall wee learne
this

this lesson? or by what means may we come vnto it? Not by ranging abroad, but by looking neere home: not by multiplying our possessions, but by diminishing from our desires.

True contentment is not to bee found in outward things, but in the minde. As our clothes cannot giue warmenesse vnto our bodies, vnlesse our bodies first giue it vnto our cloathes, so worldly things cannot bring contentment vnto our hearts, vnlesse our hearts make vs with them to be content.

No worldly thing of it selfe can bring content; Contentation is a spirituall grace, it is not grafted vpon an earthly stock: there is no proportion

i. Negatiuely.

betweene the things of this world and that. As it is impossible to replenish a corporall emptinesse with a spiritual substance (as a Chest with vertues, or the Stomake with wisdom) so is it impossible to fill a spirituall emptinesse with a bodily substance, as the soule and mind of man with earthly treasures and abundance. The appetites and desires of our hearts being spirituall, are in comparison of these earthly things almost infinite. The world is round and triquet: a tri-angle cannot be filled with a circle, yea so farre are these worldly things from yeelding content to mens desires, that they serue to set a greater edge vpon their appetites, rather as sawces to sharpen the Stomake,

Zanch. in ep.
5.

make, then as substantiall food to allay hunger. Thus we see by daily experience, that the more men haue, the more commonly they doe desire; couetousnesse growing vvith riches, as the Iuy doth vvith the Oke. And as they vvho are diseased vvith a Dropsie, the more they drinke, the more they thirst; so in those vvho affect earthly things; the more they haue, the more they would haue; and the neerer they are to abundance, the further are they from contentation.

Let vs not therefore foolishly imagine that our mindes can be satisfied, and filled vvith abundance of earthly things. As well may a man fill a Siue vvith vvater, or a bottomlesse purse

N 4 vvith

with money, as a couetous heart vvith sufficiency of riches. As therefore his folly vv ere ridiculous, who would endeavour to fill a leaking or bottomlesse vessell, in a ditch, or Pond, and not being able to do it, should carry it to a full Riuer, or to the maine Sea, because the reason why it cannot bee filled, is not in the quantitie of the water, but in the qualitie of the vessell: so the folly of couetous Worldlings is no lesse absurd, vvho when they cannot satisfie their greedy hearts, vvith competent store of riches, couet after more, thinking to giue themselves cōtentment, when they shall wallow in abundance. But all in vaine; for the fault is not in the little quantitie

tie of their riches, but in the vnſatiabſe greedineſſe of their mindes.

We muſt not then looke for contentation in the varietie of outward meanes, but in the well-ſettledneſſe of our hearts. For though the vworld may thinke it a Paradox, yet it vwill be found an vndoubted truth; that *man becommeth rich, not by multiplication, but by ſubſtraction*; not by increaſing his outward meanes, but by abating his immoderate deſires. Let vs then learne to confine our ſelues, and our vnlimited deſires, making them ſo little that they may be ſatiſfied, ſeeing the other can neuer bee ſo great, as to ſatiſfie them in their largeneſſe: for if vvee vvould liue according to nature,

2. Affirmatiuely.

ture, and not according to Lust; if vvee vould be ruled by reason, and not by opinion; how few things vould satisfie vs? and being satisfied, vve should vvant nothing.

Now to the end vvee may learne this hard, but heavenly lesson of contentation; these few Rules are to bee imbraced of vs.

1. We must consider, that true contentment (as already hath beene declared) is not to bee found in vvorldly things, but onely in those that are spirituall. Labour vvee therefore aboue all things, to attaine vnto heavenly happinesse, and to bee partakers of those eternall ioyes, which vvill fully satisfie without any loathing satiety, *that we may be satisfied with the
fatnesse*

*fatnesse of Gods house, and drinke
out of the Riuer of his pleasures.*

k Psal. 36.

8

2. In euery estate, let vs
haue an eye as wel vpon those
things, vvhich through Gods
mercy we enioy, as vpon those
things which wee vvant, and
thinke as vvell vpon vvhat we
deserue, as vvhat wee desire.
For if vvee would consider,
that in our greatest vvants, we
enioy innumerable blessings,
vvhereas our sinnes haue de-
serued that they should all bee
taken from vs; and in stead
thereof, his iudgements and
punishments inflicted as a fit
wages for our sinfull seruice:
then vvee would not be dis-
contented for what we haue
not, but contented vvith what
we haue; nor repine for vvant-
ing some things, but rather
reioyce

reioyce, that the Lord doth vouchsafe vs any thing.

3. Considering vvith our selues, that our estate and condition is destinated vnto vs by God ; who himselfe is infinite in vvisedome & knowledge, and vnto vs most gracious and mercifull. This should make vs vvholly to resigne our selues ouer to the good vvill and pleasure of God, submitting our selues to his will, that as vve pray, *Thy will bee done,* so vvec may say with a settled mind & ful resolution, *Not my will, but thy will bee done ;* and with old *Ely* thus make vp our account ; *It is the Lord, let him doe what seemeth him good.*

4. And lastly, the true and proper meanes to attaine vnto contentation, is to liue an holy and

^l Mat. 6. 10

^m Mat. 26.

39.

ⁿ 1. Sam. 3.

18.

and Christian life : *Godlineſſe with contentation* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *is great gaine*. Without godlineſſe therefore there can be no contentation. Firſt, godlineſſe muſt enrich vs, before vve can be content with what vve haue; our hearts muſt firſt be filled with better things, before we can be willing to part vvith the worſe. Againe, vvee can haue no true cōtentment, but in the Lord : But there is no content to be had in God, vvithout godlineſſe ; for the promiſes of GOD doe not appertaine vnto vs, vneſſe wee performe the conditions required of vs. Therefore the Wiſe man appropriateth contentment onely to the godly. *The righteous* (ſaith hee) *ea- teth to the contentation of his minde,*

o 1. Tim. 6.
6.

P 1oh. 4. 14

9 Pro. 13.
25.

Webbe, G.

Psal. 34. 9

Mat 6 33

minde, but the belly of the wicked shall want. And the Psalmist to the like purpose: They that feare the Lord, shall want nothing that is good, Psalme 34. 9. And our blessed Saviour herein doth confirme vs, willing vs first to seeke the Kingdome of God and his righteousness; and thereupon making a faithfull promise vnto vs, that all earthly things shall be cast upon vs.

CHA.

CH A. 18.

First, the reasons of Agur his Prayer. Secondly, the nature of prosperity. Thirdly, the danger. Fourthly, the remedies against it.

Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord, &c?

FROM the Petitions themselves in *Agurs* Prayer, we are now to proceed to the Reasons of this his praying, why hee doth so much contest against Riches and Pouertie: And why before them both, he doth prefer a competencie, or conueniencie. The reasons whereof

1. The reasons of *Agur* his prayer.

whereof (as was noted before in our sub-diuisiōn) vvere drawne, *à periculo*, from the the danger apparant, both in the one, and in the other: First, the danger of Prosperitie, in these words; *Lest I bee full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?* Secondly, the danger of aduersitie in the last words, *lest I be poore and steale, and take the Name of my God in vaine.*

The first
reason.

First I will begin vvith the first reason. The danger of Prosperitie; wherein we may behold, 1. The cause. 2. The effect. The cause proposed by a kinde of Periphrasis, *of being full*; The effects are two. 1. Atheisme: *A denying of God.* 2. Obstinacie, or opposing against God, by saying, *Who is the Lord?* Of which in their order. The

The *Periphrasis*, or *Circumlocution* of being ful, doth propose vnto vs, what prosperitie is; namely, a fulnesse or confluence of all earthly and temporall benefits; as vvealth, health, peace, honour, pleasure, and the like. The nature whereof that wee may the better consider, wee are to take notice: 1. What it is in it selfe. 2. What in our vse. In it selfe, and his owne nature prosperitie is good, as beeing the gift and blessing of God, which he bestoweth vpon his seruants, as a reward of their loue and obedience; according to that of the Psalmist: *They who loue the Lord, shall haue great prosperitie.* A signe of Gods fauour: for *the Lord taketh delight in the prosperitie of*

2. The Nature of prosperitie

^a Psal. 119.

165.

^b Ps. 35. 27

2. Sa. 5. 10.

d Psal. 118.

25.

e Psal. 122. 7.

of his servants; A signe of his
 presence: for it is said of *Da-*
uid, that *hee prospered*, for the
Lord was with him. A thing
 which the children of G O D
 may pray for, and desire both
 for themselves, and the Church
 of God, as vve haue example,
Psal. 118 25. O Lord, I pray
thee, saue now, O Lord, giue vs
now prosperitie: and *Psal. 122.*
7. Peace be within thy wals, and
prosperitie within thy Palaces.
 But howsoever prosperitie in
 it selfe bee of this goodnesse:
 but beeing considered in our
 vse, it is not absolutely good,
 but of an indifferent nature:
 good to the good, euill to the
 euill; good, to those who vse
 it well; euill to those vwho a-
 buse it vnto sin; good, when it
 commeth by lawfull meanes,
 when

when it is sanctified vnto vs by the Word and Prayer, when it is imployed to the right end; euill to wicked men and vnregenerate, who doe vnlawfully compasse it, naughtily vse it, and immoderately affect it, vnto the which abuse vvee are all naturally prone: for as the fruit is to a Child, liberty to the licentious, beauty to the lasciuious, as a sword to a madman, so is prosperity vnto vs, easie to be abused, and full of many dangers.

Thus the wise man plainly doth foretell vs, *He slayeth the foolish, and the prosperity of fooles destroyeth them:* whereby Fooles, hee vnderstandeth sinners and wicked men, by slaughter and destruction,

3. The danger of prosperity

Webbe, G.

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tion, the maine dangers prosperity doth bring vpon them. In which respect worldlings inioying prosperity, are not vnfitly compared to the little Infant, sitting at the hole of the Aspe, and playing with the Cockatrice, whose pastime is their ruine: The estate of prosperity being much more dangerous then that of aduersity. This latter being an open enemy, terrible in appearance, doth make vs more carefull to make resistance, the other a secret Traytor, which *Sinon*-like hideth hatred and hostility, vnder the vizzard of loue and friendship, & (*Syren*-like) bewitcheth vs, that we feare no danger, but rest secure; that commonly maketh vs more carefull of our wayes, more respectiue

spectiue of our duties, and either it preuenteth or mortifieth our sins. This maketh vs forgetfull of God, and all duties which we owe vnto him; It cooleth life, it doth not quite extinguish the heate of grace, it increaseth our corruptions, corrupteth our manners, and maketh vs prone vnto all sin, if we be but a little touched with the temptation. In the which respect a learned father saith, *Prosperity is much more to be feared then aduersity, seeing that aduersity for the most part bringeth forth good fruite from the bitter roote of tribulation, whereas prosperity corrupteth the soule with peruerse security, and maketh way for Satan the tempter.* For how difficult and almost impossible is it to walke
in

Aug. in Psal
67.

Webbe, G.

in the sunne-shine of this prosperity, and not to be tanned? to breathe in this infected aire, and not be tainted?

Examples.

Examples whereof abound as well in the tract of former ages, as in these our times; looke wee on the prospect of dayly experience, search wee the Annalls of former time, and wee shall finde few, very few, who haue escaped the danger of it, but huge multitudes, and whole troupes of people, who abusing it, haue beene abused by it. That which was chanted in the song of the Hebrew women when *David* came from the slaughter of *Goliath*, *Saul hath slaine his thousand, and David his tenne thousand*: may not vnfitly be applyed vnto this:
Aduer.

21. Sam.
16.7.

Aduersity hath slain his thousand, but prosperity his ten thousand.

Infinite more hauing beene vndone by prosperitie, then by aduersitie; whole Countries, Kingdomes and Monarchies, who haue conquered others, haue beene themselves conquered by their prosperitie, which first made them licentious in all manner of sin, and afterwards slaues vnto their conquered enemies.

What was *Sodomes* sinne, but fulnesse of bread? What vvas *Ephraims* fall, but prosperitie?

According to their pasture they were filled: they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore they haue forgotten mee.

What was *Iudahs* bane? *Iesurun* waxed fat, & kicked. Thou
art

^h Ezc. 16.
49.

ⁱ Hos. 13.6

* Deut. 32.
15.

¹ Iud. 2. &
3. & 4. &c.

^m 1. Sa. 10.

art waxen fat; thou art growne
thicke; thou art couered with
fatnesse: Then hee forsooke God
which made him, and lightly
esteemed the Rocke of his Salua-
tion. Looke vpon the Israel of
God, in the whole time of the
Iudges and Kings, and you
shall see them in the time of
their aduersitie religious and
deuout, forsaking their sinnes,
and seeking the Lord; but
being restored, & repossessed
of Gods blessings, and flou-
rishing in prosperitie, you shall
finde them polluting Gods
House, erecting Idolatry, for-
saking God, and worshipping
Diuels. What shall I speake of
the great difference betweene
the same men in prosperitie
and in aduersitie? Looke vpon
Saul in his meane condition,
and

and we shall see him humble,
mecke, deuout ; but see him
when he hath well warmed
his throne, how proud, inso-
lent, malicious and disobedi-
ent doth he shew himselfe?
Behold holy *David* in his af-
flicted estate, deuoted to pie-
tie ; alas, how foully foiled
with ease and prosperitie!
looke vpon *Hezekiah* in his
bed of sicknesse, and there
we shall finde him glorying
in his wealth, and in pride of
heart, boasting of his trea-
sures. And to omit multi-
tude of other examples ; Let
euery one but trie and exa-
mine himselfe, and he shall
quickly perceiue, that there
is no greater cooler of zeale,
and corrupter of the soule, in
all the world, then prosperi-

O

tie:

ⁿ 1. Sam.
22.

● Ps. 119.

^p 1. Sam.
12.

^q Isay 38.

^{2,3.}
^r Isay 39.
^{2,3.}

Webbe, G.

tie ; for this doth soften and effeminate our mindes, making them more vnapt to any goodnesse : As the lute-string softned in water, swelleth much in bignesse, but loseth his strength : so our hearts being moistened and mollified with the water of prosperitie, exceedingly swell in pride, but in the meane time lose their strength and Christian fortitude : This maketh vs retchlesse and secure; This allureth vs to all manner of sinne and iniquitie, as more at large heereafter shall appeare.

4. The remedies against the same.

By how much the more it standeth euery faithfull Christian vpon, carefully to take heed, & diligently to beware of the same. A greater measure of

of grace and Christian resolution is required to the managing of Prosperitie, then there is to the encounter of Adversitie : for as it is more intolerable to endure a tickling itch, then a smarting pain ; so it is more impossible to retaine Christian constancie in the course of godlinesse, when the world tickleth vs with the itch of Prosperitie, then when we feele the smart of trouble and affliction. Therefore Bernard testifieth thus of himselfe :
I feare no lesse Prosperitie (saith he) then Adversitie ; for Prosperitie maketh mee (with his sweetnesse) carelesse, and so deceiveth me : but Adversitie, because it hath some mixture of bitternesse, like unpleasant pot-

*Bern. medit.
ca. 14.*

*August. de
fallac. mun-
di, tom. 10.
sex. 31.*

ons, maketh me fearefull and sus-
picious. Whose practice wee
are also to follow, if wee
would carrie our selues vp-
right in this case. First, wee
are to feare prosperitie, and
to be so much the more vigi-
lant ouer all our waies, by
how much the World doth
smile vpon vs. O World (saith
Augustine) filthie, fraudulent,
and trecherous! Art thou not
much more dangerous, when thou
art kinde, then when thou art
troublesome? Art thou not much
more to be feared, when thou al-
lurest, then when thou despisest?
Art thou not much more odi-
ous, whiles thou dissemblest
loue, then when thou pro-
fessest mortall hatred? Se-
condly, wee are with all our
wit and might to resist the
temptations

temptations of the same; when our prosperitie would tempt vs to bee proud, wee must beate downe that conceit within our selues; remembering, that this is but one of Gods common blessings: when Prosperitie would allure vs to wantonnesse, wee must repell that motion, by considering the end wherefore God doth giue the same vnto vs; namely, as rewards to keepe vs in obedience: when Prosperitie would tempt vs to be secure, wee must stricke against it, considering then that we haue the greater causes to watch ouer all our waies, being exposed by it to so many dangers. *It is (saith one) a note of a singular vertue, to stricke and contend*
 O ; with

August. 10m.
10. sep. 13.

Webbe, G.

with worldly felicitie, that it may
neither corrupt nor ouertrow vs:

A great unhappinesse it is to be o-
uercome of this earthly happines.

3. We must limit our selfe in
the vse of this our Prosperity,
that we venture not too farre
vpon it. If in our trauels we
wil not go too nigh the ridge
of a way, nor ride too nigh
the brinke of a pit; how much
more in our Spirituall iourney
should be wary that we lanch
not too far forth into the depth
of our Prosperitie, or take the
most of the same, but vse it so,
as if we vsed it not. 4. We must
be careful to vse our Prosperi-
ty to Gods glory, for the right
way to continue it to vs, & vs
in it, when we return it to his
glory, from whom we haue it,
& to the right end for which
we

we haue it. 5. In the midst of our Prosperitie, wee must fore-cast Aduersitie; considering with our selues, that, though now we abound, yet a time may come when wee may want; though now we are at the full, yet, we may be hungrie; though now we are wealthy, yet, we may be impouerished, and therefore not so much to reioice in what we haue, as to acknowledge that it may be lost; and because it may be lost, not willingly to lose our selues with the same. Sixthly, wee must indifferently arme our selues both for Prosperitie and Aduersitie, that the one may not aduance vs, nor the other dismay vs; but like vnto *Socrates*, we may euer con-

Terent. in Phormione.
Omnes cum secunde res sunt, tum maxime meditari secum oportet, quo pacto aduersam eorum ferant, pericula, damna, exilia, &c.

Solinus l. 4.

*Seneca in
Thyeste.*

*Nemo confi-
dat nimium
secundis:*

*Nemo despe-
rat meliora
lapsis: mis-
cet hec illis,
prohibetque
Clotho stare
fortunam,
rotat omne
satum.*

*Ausonius in
Periandri
sentsent.*

*Si fortuna
inat, caueto
tolli, Si for-
tuna tonat,
caueto mer-
gi.*

tinue the same countenance :
According to that of the
Poet :

*Let no man trust Prosperitie,
Let none distrust Aduersitie ;
They both are placed on that wheele,
Which wheelles about, and stands not still.*

And another.

*If World fawne, be not too bold,
If World frowne, be not too cold.*

CHAP.

CHA. 19.

Prosperity an enemy to pietie, in making men; First, forgetfull of God. Secondly, idolaters. Thirdly, proud and contemptuous. Fourthly, negligent in holy duties.

BESIDES those ciuill euils which Prosperitie bringeth to her fauorites (as effeminatenesse, weakenesse, enuie, disdain, diseases, shortnesse of life, and many other such like outward and inward dangers, which for breuitie I omit) There are many spirituall euils which do accompanie it, and are most to be feared: These our Prophet

Prosperities chiefest euils,

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phet *Agur* heere aimeth at, whiles he sheweth the reason why he doth not desire to liue in much prosperity; lest being full, he should deny God, and say, *Who is the Lord.*

Making
men to de-
ny God,
&c.

Thereby pre-admonishing vs, what a dangerous enemy Prosperitie is vnto Pietie, in withdrawing our hearts from God (which is a kind of denying of God) and making proud, presumptuous, rebellious, and negligent in the duties of Gods seruice; as, not caring for the Lord.

1. By making them forgetfull of God.

^s Math. 6.
21, 24.

That Prosperitie maketh many to deny God, it is apparant, by the little esteeme it causeth them to haue of God; for it doth withdraw the hearts of men from God; *Whereas the treasure is, there will*

will the heart be also. *Cui dulcescit Christus, amarescit mundus*: As the love of God increaseth, the love of the World abateth; as the World getteth strength, the love of God is weakened and diminished. It maketh men forgetfull of God: *The man in prosperitie is so proud, that hee seeketh not for God.* This the Lord complaineth by his Prophet; *They were filled, and their heart was exalted, They haue forgotten me.* Prosperitie a delicious draught (as it were of the lethe of obliuion) that the heads of men are intoxicated with her bewitching-caps; their senses so benumbed, and all the faculties of their soules, so stupified and dead, that the Lord is not

u Ps. 10. 4.

x Ho. 13. 6.

Webbe, G.

not in any of their thoughts: for howsoever Gods gifts should put men in minde of the Giuer, and his manifold mercy vouchsafed vnto them in the fruition of these earthly benefits, should serue as continuall remembrances to put them in minde of him who hath beene so gracious vnto them: yet through the corruption of mans nature, the more of these temporall blessings men receiue from God, the lesse they thinke they neede him, and the seldomer thinke vpon him.

2. By Idolatrye.

Neither doth Prosperitie alone cause men to forget God, and so withdraw their hearts from him, that in a manner, they deny God: But also, it maketh them become
Idola

Idolaters, by setting vp another god ; for, the most part of them that flow in outward wealth and prosperitie, *Blesse themselves in their abundance* (as the Psalmist speaketh.) And againe, *They trust in their Riches, and boast themselves in the multitude of their Wealth.* And the Wiseman saith, that the Rich mans riches are his strong Citie, and as a high wall in his imagination: vnto which vain confidence, men are so prone naturally in that estate, that vnlesse an extraordinary measure of grace preferue vs from falling into this sinne, it is impossible for men to abound in wealth and outward prosperitie, and not to put confidence in it. Therefore the sonne of *Syrach* reputeth

^a Ps. 10. 3.

^b Ps. 49. 6.

^c Pro. 18. 11.

Eccles. 31.
8,9.

teth it almost a myracle, for a man in Prosperitie to keepe himselfe vpright ; *Blessed (saith he) is the Rich who is found without blemish, and hath not gone after gold, nor hoped in mony and treasures ; for, who is Hee, and we will commend him ? for wonderfull things hath Hee done among his people.*

3. By pride
and con-
tempt.

^aPs. 17. 10

Again, Prosperity maketh proud, and Pride bringeth contempt of God and Man : Thus the Psalmist obserueth, that Pride and Plentie goe together ; *They are inclosed (saith he) in their owne fat, and they haue spoken proudly with their mouth.* And elswhere, he saith, that worldlings, because they come not in trouble like other men, but flourish in all plentie and prosperity ;

rity; Therefore they put on Pride
 as a chain about their necks; They
 speake loftie, and set their mouth
 against the beauens, and their
 tongue walketh through the
 earth. This we may see in Pha-
 raoh, who wallowing in the
 midst of earthly prosperitie,
 grew so insolent, that when
 hee was put in minde of the
 Lord, he contemptuously re-
 plied, *Who is the Lord, that I*
should obey his voice. And Iob
 describeth the like propertie
 of prosperitie. *Iob. 21.* They
 live and become great in power,
 their seed is established in their
 sight, and their off-spring before
 their eies, there houses are safe
 from feare, neither is the rodde
 of God upon them; their Bull
 gendreth and faileth not, their
 Cow calueth and casteth not her
 Calfe;

e Ps. 73. 6,
 8.

f Ex. 5. 2.

g Iob. 21,
 7, 8, 9, 10,
 11, 12, 13,
 14.

Webbe, G.

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Calfe ; They spend their daies in
Wealth : Therefore, they say un-
to God , Depart from vs ; for
wee desire not the knowledge of
thy waies : What is the Almigh-
tie , that wee should serue him ?
And what profit should we haue,
if we should pray vnto him ? The
which practice, wee also may
obserue, in these our times, a-
mong the ruffling gallants of
the World, who hauing been
alwaies nursed in the lap of
prosperitie , and hauing all
things which their heart
could wish, are readie in lieu
of thankfulnessse towards
God, to despise him (as it
were) to his face, and to pull
him out of his Throne, by
their oathes, blasphemies, and
bitter execrations : whereby
it appeareth, that Pride bor-
dereth

dereth vpon Prosperitie, and making way for all Spirituall diseases ; causeth them who are infected with it, to bee more sluggish and slouthfull, vnweildy and impotent in all actions of pietie and duties of Christianitie.

Neither is this rare and vn-usual to see those vpon whom the World fawneth, and who abound with earthly prosperitie, to be slacked and negligent in the seruice of God, and in vsing the meanes of their saluation : but so common, and almost vniuersall, that seldome shall we finde a man in great prosperitie, to be endued with great pietie, *Rara fumant faelicibus ara* ; seldome shall wee see any burning in zeale, or earnest in religious

4. By security & negligēce in Gods seruice.

ligious duties, who hath the World at will, and plentie or abundance of earthly things. It is true indeed, that in reason, these temporarie benefits should, as the Lords wages, encourage vs to do his work, and make vs with more alacritie and cheerefulnesse, performe diligent service to so liberall a Master : But such is the corruption of our depraued nature, that we are rather hindered then furthered in all good duties, by worldly abundance : and like gluttons and drunkards, hauing store and plentie of these good blessings, wee feeding on them with a greedie appetite, doe surfet ; and drinking off these full cups with vnsatiable thirst, we are made drunken

drunken with excesse, and so
thereby, our heads intoxica-
ted, and our minds besotted,
and our bodies enfeebled,
that wee become slouthfull,
and impotent to performe a-
ny good dutie of the seruice
of God.

O worldly Prosperitie!
what a world of mischief
hast thou wrought in this
world of mortalitie? how
many a *Demas* hast thou
withdrawne from the loue of
Christ, to embrace the World?
how many a *Dietrophes* hast
thou allured on the baite of
preeminence, to reiect the
Truth? how many a *Iehu* hast
thou cooled in zeale? how
many an *Ephesian* hast thou
enforced to forsake his first
loue? how many a *Galatian*
hast

h 2. Tim.
4.10.

i 3. Ioh. 9.

k 2. King.
10.29.

l Rev. 2.4.

^m Gal. 3. 3

ⁿ Gen. 19.
26.

• Luke 9.
vlt.

^p Job 12. 6

hast thou bewitched, that ha-
uing begun in the Spirit, they
should end in the Flesh? how
many hast thou caused, like
Lots wife, to looke backe a-
gaine vnto *Sodome*, and after
they haue put their hands to
the plow of an holy professi-
on, to become vnfit for the
Kingdome of God?

Let no man therefore much
affect, desire, or doat vpon
Prosperitie: for, it is but one
of Gods ordinarie blessings,
which he bestoweth euen vp-
on the wicked and vngodly:
It no whit bettereth our Spi-
rituall estate; It maketh vs
nothing more esteemed in
the sight of God; It is full
of dangers, and being abused,
it doth not only deprive vs of
our portion in our heavenly
in-

inheritance, but maketh vs
lyable to the greater tor-
ment. Let vs therefore al-
waies be watchfull ouer our
selues, but especially when
the World fawneth vpon vs,
and when we are in prosperi-
tie : for it is more dangerous
being our friend, then being
our enemy, and more to be
taken heed of when it enti-
seth vs to loue it, then when
it forceth vs to contemne it;
for (as one well noteth) It
*smileth, that it may rage; It flat-
tereth, that it may betray vs; and
exalteth, that it may ouerthrow
vs: Although therefore this dan-
gerous Sea looke smooth, & as it
were smiling vpon thee; yet, it
hath many wanes and dangerous
billowes: weigh therefore your an-
kers, hoise vp your sailes, let the
crosse*

*Hieron. ad
Heltodov.
tom. I. p. 3.*

*croffe be fastned to the saile-yard:
for this calme will prone a tem-
pest.*

CH A. 20.

*First, Agurs second reason.
Secondly, Pouerties enormi-
ties. Thirdly, of Theft.
Fourthly, of taking the name
of God in vaine.*

*Lest I bee poore and
steale, and take the
name of my God in
in vaine.*

*I. Agurs
second
Reason.*

THe second reason of *A-
gurs* prayer, is that
which

which moued him to pray against Pouertie. And this is drawne from the danger of Pouertie. As Riches haue their dangers, so Pouertie is not without her euils; Neither of them in themselves, but through the abuse of mens corruptions: The euils incident vnto Pouertie, are reduced here into two heads. First, Iniustice; *lest I steale.* Secondly, Profanenesse; *and take the name of my God in vaine.*

Many are the euils into which by Pouerty men many times doe throw themselves. First, Enuie: for poore men in want, are prone to enuy others that haue enough, and to repine at other mens prosperitie: so did the poore Philistines

2. Pouer-
ties enor-
mities.

⁹Gen.26.
14.

Webbe, G.

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listims enuy Isaacks plentie:
 Gen. 26. 14. Hee had possession
 of Flocks, and possession of
 Heards, and great store of Ser-
 uants, therefore the Philistims
 enuied him. And this Salomon
 did obserue in Pouertie: Ec.
 4. 4. I haue considered all tra-
 uell, and euery work, that for this
 a man is enuied of his neighbour.
 Secondly, Impatiencie: for it
 is vsuall with poore men to
 murmur, and to grow impa-
 tient, when they faile of their
 fill, or haue not what they do
 desire; so did the Children of
 Israel murmur against Moses
 and the Lord in their want of
 water at Rhephidim; The peo-
 ple thirsted there for water, and
 the people murmured against
 Moses, &c. Exod. 17. 3. And
 in another extremitie, it is
 said,

Eccl. 4. 4.

Ex. 17. 3.

said: that the people murmured
& complained against the Lord,
and wept bitterly, Numb. 11. 1.

Num. 11. 1

And so at this day nothing is
more vsuall then impatient
murmurings, complaints and
outcries among those who are
in pouerty. 3. Idlenesse: for as
pouerty is the fruit of idlenes,
Pro. 10. 4. so idlenesse most
commonly is a companion of
pouerty; poore people many
times, because they cannot
haue as others haue, therefore
become idle, and will not take
paines to haue any thing about
them. None commonly more
idle then they who are most
poore: Slothfulnesse casteth
them into a most deepe sleepe;
therfore the idle soule doth suffer
hunger, Pro 19. 15. 4. Impu-
dency: for many poore people,

P

as

Pro. 10.

15.

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2 Pro. 28.
21.

as they want meanes, so they are void of grace : They liue in a lawlesse course, flattering for aduantage, and readie to transgresse for a piece of bread, *Pro. 28. 21.* Many other euils there are, which poore men many times fall into. But none more vsuall then those two, which are mentioned here in the Text : 1. *Theft.* 2. *Blasphe- mie ; To steale, and to take the Name of God in vaine.*

3. Of theft.

2 Ex. 20. 15

b Zech. 5. 4

The former whereof, name- ly, *Theft*, is a great and capitall sinne, expressely forbidden by the eighth Commandement: *Thou shalt not Steale.* There is a dreadfull curse denounced a- gainst it, *Zech. 5. 4.* *It shal enter into the house of the Thiefe, and remaine in the midst of his house, and consume it, with the Stones*
and

and timber thereof. There bee diuers kinds of Theft: 1. Inward theft in the heart, which is by longing after our neighbors goods. This is accounted Theft in the sight of God. 2. Pet. 2. 14. Mich. 2. 2. 2. Outward theft, which cometh vnto the outward act of taking from others that which doth not belong vnto vs. This is committed two wayes. 1. Publikely. 2. Priuatly. Against 1. The Church, by detaining Tithes and Offerings, and either defrauding or conuerting to our owne vse things sanctified, and appointed for holy vses; a robbery in the highest degree. For it is abomination to deuoure things sanctified, Prou. 20. 25. 2. Against the Commonwealth, when men take
P 2 vnto

^c 2. Pet. 2.
14.
Mich. 2. 2.

^d Mal. 3. 8.
^e Prou. 25.

Webbe, G.

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vnto themselues, and make a priuate gaine of that which should bee imployed for the common good. A foule fault, and an high degree of Theft; so much the more hainous, because it is the more generall; & so much the greater wrong, by how much it toucheth more; so much the more vniust, because they bee Theeues in request, and robbers that are in credit. Priuate stealth is either from a mans own selfe, or others. In the former kinde they offend, who either by ouer-miserable niggardlinesse rob themselues of the vse of that which they haue in their owne keeping, or by ouer-lauish spending, waste and consume what they haue. In the latter kinde they sin, who
either

f̄ eccl. 6. 1.
 & Pro. 21.
 17.

either by Sea or Land, secretly, or openly; fraudulently, or violently, take away the goods of other men.

Poore men many times proue theeves in all these kinds of stealthes. They are publike theeves, when by their idlenes they rob the Commonwealth of the benefit which should proceede out of their labours, and the Church of those dues which might bee improved if they had beene industrious.

They are priuate theeves against themselves, by idlenesse, wastfulnesse, and want of providence: against others in stealing, and pilfering away the goods of other men. For how hard a thing is it for a man to bee in want and great neede himselfe, and not to couet o-

h Luk. 16. 3

ther mens. And how vsuall thing it is with men in this case, to imitate the example of the vniust Steward, Luk. 16. 3. *What shall I doe? I cannot digge, and to begge I am ashamed: therefore I will steale.* Hence commeth it to passe, that there are so many High-way robberies; such breaking vp of houses, and Hedges; such pilfering and purloining from other men; such deceiuing and receiuing of the goods of other men, practised by many in their pouerty, who thinke this, and much more, warrantable enough for them to doe, because they are poore.

But why should poore men steale? Pouerty it selfe, in it selfe (as formerly hath been declared) is not euill: Why will they

they be
He tha
will con
Hab. 2
leth, (ha
Why
greater
and thy
if they
though
shall do
good:
selues.
chiefe v
house.
man get
neighbo
gettreth
many p
and row
vpon hi
Yet t
fes for t

they bring this euill vpon it?
He that doth so, *conueteth an e-
uill conuetousnesse to his house,*
Hab. 2. 9. Every one that stea-
leth, shall be cut off. Zach. 5. 3.
Why wilt thou pull downe
greater misery vpon thy selfe,
and thy Family? Men thinke
if they can come by any thing,
though it be by stealth, they
shall doe themselves & theirs
good: but they deceiue them-
selves. This bringeth a mis-
chiefe vpon them, and their
house. So many things as a
man getteth by stealth frō his
neighbour, so many curses hee
getteth to his soule; and so
many plagues hee wrappeth
and rowleth together to come
vpon his posterity.

Yet they will alledge excu-
ses for this their stealing. As

P 4

first,

i Hab. 2. 9.

k Zech. 5. 3

Webbe, G.

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first; Alas, say they, Wee are poore and in misery. The world hath forsaken vs; wee haue no friend to helpe vs; What would you haue vs do? What? euen any thing rather then this. Haue men forsaken you? And will you make God also to forsake you? You can haue no helpe in the world; will you shut vp Heauen also against your selues? This is not to lessen the Crosse, but to increase the curse, & to bring the weight of greater misery vpon their heads. They will reply; It is but a small thing w^{ch} they haue stoln, some few sticks of wood, a little corne out of the sheafe, or some triuiall matter? Is it a small thing that hath beene stolne? Then the more base & abiect sinner
art

art thou, who wilt corrupt thy conscience for so smal a thing; hee that will racke his conscience for a trifle, wil neuer stick to doe ten times worse for a matter of greater moment: he that will doe the Diuell such seruice for so simple and small wages, let the Diuell mend his wages, he will certainly mend his worke: so that this excuse proueth a man to bee the more inexcusable. O but (say they) I am a poore man, and he from whom I haue taken this, is able to spare it well enough, it will doe him none harme, and mee good, and therefore I hope there is no such danger in it. But who made thee a diuider of other mens goods? who gaue thee authoritie to make any such partition? Hath not

God giuen him that which is his, and vnto thee, that vvhich is thine? And darest thou (not contented with Gods distribution) take that which belongeth not vnto thee? whether thy neighbour can spare it or no, is not the question, God hath absolutely forbidden thee to take away any mans goods without his leaue, and therefore thou shouldest not do it? And the more poore thou art, the more neede thou hast to keepe peace & league with God. If God do chastise thee with want, it were a farre better course to repent, and to intreat the helpe of God, then to adde more to thy sinne, and so to cause God to adde more strokes, and corrections, to those which hee hath already

already laid vpon thee.

Now if it bee so hainous a sinne for a poore man to steale; how much more grieuous a sinne must theft bee in those who haue enough of their owne, and not driuen to any necessitie? *Men doe not despise a Thiefe (saith Salomon) if he steale to satisfie his soule when he is hungry.* But when a man stealeth, not being forced thereto through neede; vvhathall be thought of such a one? *A wound and dishonour shal he get, and his reproch shal not be wiped away.* Woe then to the rich Theeues of these our times, vvho hate & hang the smaller theeues, themselves boldly and wantonly going on in greater Theft. They that make no conscience to make a prey vpon

¹Pro.6.30

^m verse 33

Webbe, G.

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ⁿIos. 7. 1.

^oAct. 5. 3.

^pMal. 3. 8.

^qyerse. 9.

vpon others : that heape vp
wealth by Vsury, Oppression,
and other such like iniurious
courses : worse then sacrilegi-
ous *Achans* of our time, Sy-
monaical Patrons, & Church-
robbing *Ananias*ses, who vn-
iustly impropriate the Reue-
nues of the Church to their
owne proper vse, or keep back
the portion due to the *Leuites*.
If it bee a sinne to steale from
man, much more sinfull must
it needs bee to rob the Lord.
And the Lord himselfe recko-
neth that robbery against
himselfe, when the Tithes are
either denied, or badly paid to
the Priests and Leuites. And
marke what followeth: *There-
fore* (saith the Lord) *ye are
cursed with a curse : for ye haue
spoiled me, euen this whole Nati-
on.*

on. Wheresoeuer this sinne is
 suffered, there the curse of God
 hangeth over a whole Land.
 This sinne at this day is a com-
 mon sin; and the more com-
 mon, the more to be lamented:
 for it is a disgrace vnto religiō,
 and an enemy vnto all Pietie.
 They who would seeme reli-
 gious, and yet make no con-
 science of this, their Religion
 is vaine, and they take the
 Name of God in vaine; which
 is the next adiunct vnto the
 sinne of theft, as it followeth
 in the last words of the Text;
*Lest I be poore, and steale, and
 take the name of my God in
 vaine.*

The Name of God is diuersly
 taken in the sacred scriptures:
 sometimes for God himselfe;
 sometimes for the Attributes
 of

4. Of ta-
 king the
 name of
 God in
 vaine.

^r Psal. 20. 6^f Ex. 3. 14.^t Mat. 10.

41.

^u Io. 12. 28.^a Phi. 2. 10^b Mat. 5.

43

^c Zech. 5. 4^d Leu. 24.

15.

^e 1. King.

19. 2.

^f Ifay 66. 2.^g 1. Cor. 10

31.

^h Luke 13.

1. 2. 3.

ⁱ 2. Sam. 12

11.

of God: as his Mercy, Iustice, Power, Wisedome, &c. sometimes for his Word, sometimes for his Workes, sometimes for his honour, and praise arising from all these. This Name of God is taken in vaine. 1. By a carelesse and irreuerent vsing of his name in our common speech. 2. By common swearing, and false swearing. 3. By blasphemie or any speech that saouureth of contempt vnto the diuine Maiestie. 4. By cursing and banning. 5. By sleight esteeme of the Word of God, or making iests out of the same. 6. By abusing the creatures of God, or not obseruing them to the due honour and praise of God. 7. By light passing ouer the iudgements of God. 8. By a dissolute

dissolute conuersation, when men professing Religion, doe not liue a life answerable and agreeable to their profession; according to that which the Apostle speaketh of the dissolute Iewes, *Rom. 2. 24. The Name of the Lord through you is blasphemed among the Gentiles.*

*k Rom. 2.
24.*

Now Pouerty doth many times cause men to take the Name of God in vaine; both in that distrust which it planteth in poore mens hearts, of Gods prouidence, and in many murmurings, & repinings at their own wants, and in the many lyes, oathes, and curses, which it exposeth men vnto, and in the vnlawfull attempts which it doth suggest vnto them, for the making vp of their

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their maintenance, and generally in that profanenesse, and impietie of life, wherein for the most part, the poorer sort doe welter, to the dishonour of God, and reproch of Religion.

A great blemish in whomsoever, and in which kind soever before specified. For why should poore people distrust the providence of God, seeing that *the Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runne unto it, and are safe*? Or why should they murmur against the Lords dealing with them, seeing hee both knoweth, and doeth what is best for them? Or why should they betake themselves to shifts, and unlawfull courses; seeing that the Lord hath promised that hee will

^lPro.18.
10.

^mRo.8.28

will neuer faile or forsake thee? What a shame is it for Christians, to sweare, curse, and reuile others? What a disgrace is it to Religion, to liue either idly, or dissolutely; or to carke and care heathenishly for the things of this world? They are poore indeed, who vndertake these poore, weake, and wicked shifts. Yea, this will; be so farre from relieuing their necessities; that in the end, if they doe not repent, it will plague them in endlesse misery.

By how much the more is it to be lamented, that this is not onely the sinne of Povertie, but a common sinne & iniquity in these our times, to take the Name of God in vaine: Swearing, Lying, Stealing, Whoring, Killing, and what

o 1. Pet. 2.
23.

p Mat. 6. 32

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Jer. 23. 10

what sinne not? are now common finnes. And in whom most? In poore men? No. But in the rich and great men. It is the onely gentleman-like fashion, to take the name of God in vaine. Because of oathes, *this land mourneth*. Neuer was the Name of God so blasphemed, and prophaned among the Heathen, as it is at this day euery where, euen by those who take vpon them the name of Christians. What hellish blasphemies, new coined oathes, and fearefull curses do wee heare daily, and houely, clattering about our eares? What vnchristian practices, and inhumane courses may we euery where behold with our eyes? who be there that haue any care to adorne their
pro-

profession, with a godly conversation: and how ill a name hath Religion euery where, by reason of the ill liues of those who professe it? Where is a man, almost, to be found, that daily taketh not the name of his God in vaine?

O let vs not flatter our selues in these so great and fearfull sinnes: for these things doth *the Land mourne*. And they shall surely one day mourne, who are guilty of the same: for *the Lord will not hold him guiltlesse*, that taketh his name in vaine. As the offence is heinous, so will the punishment be proportionable. It is God who vndertaketh it to prosecute against them: hee will not put it vp, but bee reuenged vpon them.

Let

[Hos. 4.4.]

[Ex. 20.7.]

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^tLeuit.10^uMat.6.9.

Let vs all therefore looke warily vnto our selues, that we be not polluted with this sin: God will bee glorified in all that come neere vnto him. If wee doe not honour him according to our profession, his hand will bee vpon vs to our confusion. If wee pray, *Hallowed bee thy Name*, with our mouth, and seeke not his honour in our life, we bewray in our selues damnable hypocrisie, and are guilty of great iniquitie. Wee must remember that we carry the Name of the Lord, therefore our liues must bee answerable to our profession; neither want should discourage vs, nor wealth hinder vs from this holy practise. But this should be the right end of our life, eueryday in our Calling

ling and conuerſation, to aime
at Gods honour and glory;
and not our owne praiſe,
wealth, pleaſure, or dignity.

CH A. 2 I.

The Concluſion with reference.

*First, to thoſe who live in a
middle eſtate. Secondly, to
the Rich. Thirdly, to the
Poore: together with a forme
of Prayer, fit to be uſed both
by Rich and Poore.*

THUS haue wee waded
thorow this ſhort, but pi-
thy Prayer of our Prophet A-
gur. Wee haue ſeene the ſub-
ſtance of it both in the whole,
and in the parts: wee haue ta-
ken notice of the manner and
matter

The con-
cluſion.

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matter of this prayer: and therein haue beene taught directions for our praying, Caueats against vanitie and lyes, the nature, vse, and abuse of both pouerty and riches, the excellency of a meane estate, and the ready way vnto true contentation. What now remaineth, but that wee reduce this Theory vnto Ipractice, and make a good vse of what herein hath beene obserued, either for our imitation or euitation?

i. To those
who liue
in a middle
estate.

And here i. for those whom God hath blessed with the grant of *Agurs* wish, that they enioy what he desired, neither penury nor superfluity, but a cōuenient competency, Food & Rayment, outward meanes conuenient for them; let them

ac-

acknowledge how great cause they haue to blesse God, who hath thus blessed them, that in this sea of the world they may saile in such a middle and euen course, with lesse feare and more comfort. They may say with *David*, *The lines are falln vnto me in a pleasant place, I haue a goodly beritage*; let thē not aspire to higher prosperity, nor despaire in feare of misery, let them acknowledge themselves in better case then many of their brethren, and lesse subiect to temptations vnto sinne: Therefore let them praise the Name of the Lord, for the good estate which he hath giuen them: let them resolute with *Iacob*, *I haue enough*; and with *Jeremy*, *not to mind earthly things*; let
Da-

^a Psal. 16. 6

^b Deu. 8. 11

^c Gen. 45
28.

^d Ier. 45. 5.

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e Pl. 4. 6, 7.

Dauids Ditty be their melody,
There bee many that say, who
will shew vs any good? Lord, if
thou vp the light of thy counte-
nance vpon vs, Thou hast put
gladnesse in mine heart, more
then in the time that their Corne
and their Wine increased.

2. To the
Rich.f Psal. 73.
10, 12.g Psal. 62.
10.h 1. Tim. 6.
17.

As for those whom God
hath blessed with a greater
measure of earthly meanes,
who prosper in the world, &
increase in wealth, hauing
waters of a full Cup wrung out
vnto them; let them remember
the Caueat of the Psalmist, If
Riches increase, set not your
hearts vpon them; and the
charge of the Apostle, Charge
them that bee rich in this world,
that they be not high minded, nor
trust in uncertaine Riches, but
in the liuing God, who giueth vs
all

all things richly to enjoy : Let them remember that the greater their portion is, heere in these wordly things, the greater is their danger; the greater their account, the greater their condemnation, if they doe abuse the same. Therefore the admonition of Gregory may be well applyed vnto them. Let those who enjoy this worldly prosperity (saith he) be admonished, that when they haue all things according to their hearts desire, they do not neglect to seek after the chiefe Fountaine of all their goodnesse, nor fixe their minds vpon these things when they enjoy them, lest they esteem and lone their Pilgrimage in stead of their Country, and turne the helpes and comforts of their iourney, into hinderances
Q of

*Gregor. past.
par. 3. ad-
mon. 27.*

of attaining vnto their iournies end; and lest they be so delighted with the light of the moone, that they neglect the fruition of the Sunnes brightnesse. But esteeming these earthly things the comforts of their calamity, not the rewards of retribution, let them lift vp their mindes aboue all earthly fauour, lest with their hearts delight they wholly rest in them, for he that contemneth not worldly prosperity, in comparison of that loue which he beareth to a better life, hee turneth the fauours of this transitory life into the occasion of eternall death.

3. To the
poore.

Lattly, for those who are scanted of the vse of these outward meanes, and liue in poore and meane estate, let not them despaire, nor too much

much bee cast downe with
griefe, let them remember
that Nature is contented with
a little, and doth not require
much: that aduersity is no to-
ken of Gods displeasure, nor
prospecity of his fauour, that
no man is borne rich, and that
death will strip a man of all his
riches, that the lesse their por-
tion is in those earthly things,
the lesse is their account, that
they haue a Father in Heauen
which knoweth their wants,
and will not faile them nor
forsake them: that all things,
yea euen this their pouerty
doth worke together for their
good. Therefore let them
not enuy the prosperity of o-
ther men, nor grieue at their
owne misery, let them be-
ware of diffidence in Gods

ⁱMat.6.32

^kRo.8.28.

ⁱPsal.37.1.

Q 2

pro-

m 1. Pet. 5.
7.

m Mat. 5. 3.

o Phil. 4.
11, 12, 13.

The
means for
the per-
formance
hereof.

prouidence, let them not re-
pine and murmur against
God, nor vse vnlawfull means
for the raising vp of their de-
cayed estate: let them cast their
care vpon the Lord, for *he ca-
reth for them*: let them labour
to make a good vse of their
temporall pouerty, that it may
effect in them a spirituall po-
uerty: let them learne that
sweet & heauenly lesson of the
Apostle, *I haue learned in what-
(soeuer estate I am, therewith to
be content: I know both how to
be abased, and how to abound, in
all things I am instructed, both
to be full and to be hungry, both
to abound, and to suffer need: I
can do all things through Christ
which strengtheth me.*

And indeede it must be
Christ which must strengthen

vs

vs, and fit vs to beare those estates in which wee are, or else we shall neuer be able to performe it. Therefore wee are earnestly to pray vnto the Lord, and to desire the assistance of his holy Spirit, in whatsoeuer estate it pleaseth him to seate vs. To the which end, I haue annexed these two following formes of Prayer, as a direction vnto those who are not better furnished with better meditations of their owne.

Q 3

The

The Rich mans

PRAYER.

P s. Chro.
29. 11, 12.

O Lord God, who art infinite in greatnesse, power, glory, and Majesty: for all that is in the Heauen, and in the earth, is thine; thine is the Kingdome, O Lord, and thou art exalted ouer all: Both Riches and Honour come of thee: in thine hand is power and might: In thine hand it is to make great, and to giue strength to all; blessed be thy holy name, as for all thy mercies which from time to time thou hast vouchsafed to mee thy most unworthy Seruant; so in particular,

cular, for that large and ample portion of these thine earthly blessings which thou hast given me above many other of thy servants, whereby I might bee the better enabled to serve thee, and to set forth thy glory. For what am I? Or what is there in mee? that thine hand hath beene so bountifull unto mee? I acknowledge that it was not any desert of mine, neither was it my labor, wit, or industry, that have procured this wealth and riches about me, but thine onely favour and mercy towards me. Now therefore, O my God, I thanke thee, and praise thy glorious name for this my store: Humbly beseeching thy divine Maiesty, that thine inward blessing may accompany these thine outward blessings. Sanctifie them, good Lord,

unto me, and me unto thy selfe,
that I may use these blessings of
thine aright, and may be found a
faithfull Steward of that which
thou hast committed to my charge.

Assist me with thy grace, that I
may not over-value this wealth
aboue it's worth; let not my heart
be set upon it, neither let it with-
draw my heart from thee. Pre-
serve and keepe mee from pride,
securitie, unthankesfulnesse, co-
uetousnesse, greedinesse, slothful-
nesse, and negligence in the duties
of thy seruice, together with all
other temptations, snares and
foolish lusts, which commonly doe
accompany worldly wealth, and
riches. Let not my prosperity
puffe me up, nor choake the seed of
thy Word, nor impouerish spiritu-
all graces in me: Let them not
infatuate mine understanding,

¶ 1. Tim. 6.
10.

¶ Luk. 8. 14

¶ Psa. 10. 5.

¶ 2. Cor. 4.

4.
¶ Ps. 50. 21

x Isa. 21. 12

nor make me blinde in the way to
Heauen; let them not breed in
me impenitencie, and hardnesse
of heart, nor expose mee to thy
heauy wrath and iudgements.
Deliuers me from the many cares,
feares, sorrowes, and manifold
dangers, which accompany Ri-
ches. And forasmuch as by the
addition of these temporal things
thou hast vouchsafed mee a dou-
ble portion: So good Lord, assist
me with thy grace, that I may
redouble my dutifull diligence in
thy seruice. Giue me grace to re-
member that it was not my pow-
er, nor the strength of mine owne
hand that hath prepared me this
abundance: but thou the Lord,
who hast giuen mee power to get
substance. Giue mee grace ener-
more, and in all things to keep a
good conscience. Make these thy
Q 5 blessings

^a Deu. 8. 10

^b Act. 24.

16.

c 1. Cor. 7.

31.

d Eccl. 5.

17.

c Pro. 31.

f Pro. 13.

22.

e Eph. 4.

28.

blessings vnto mee, instruments
 and meanes of well doing. Let
 mee so vse this world, as
 though I vsed it not. Giue mee
 that comfort in these earthly
 goods which thou allottest vnto
 them that feare thee. Continue
 and so increase my store (if it bee
 thy blessed will) that I may haue
 enough for my Family, and may
 lay up somewhat for my posterity:
 and not onely so, but that I may
 haue alwaies somewhat to giue
 vnto him that needeth. Giue me
 true contentment in that which
 thou giuest vnto mee, and make
 me willing to leaue all my wealth
 and riches, whensoever it shall
 please thee to take them from me.
 O let me not mis-spend the wealth
 which thou hast giuen me, in ex-
 cesse, vanity, and ryot, neither to
 impropriate it only to my selfe, as

if

if it were mine owne, but as a good & faithfull Steward, imploy them to the honour of thee my Master, and the good of my fellow seruants. Grant, O heauenly Father, that I may so vse these things temporall, that finally I lose not things eternall.

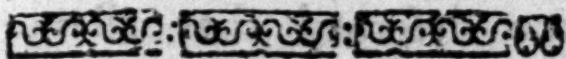
Giue me grace euermore truely to serue, glorifie, & honour thee, and to put my trust in thee the liuing God, who giuest vs richly all things to enioy, that I may doe good, and bee rich in good workes, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying vp in store for my selfe a good foundation against the time to come, that I may lay hold on eternall Life; To the which, I beseech thee to brnig mee, through the merits of thy deare Sonne, my blessed Sauour Iesus Christ:
To

h1. Tim. 6.
17, 18, 19.

*To whom with thee and thine
holy Spirit, bee ascribed all ho-
nour and glory, praise, power,
might and dominion, now
and for euermore.*

Amen.

The



The Poore mans P R A Y E R.

O Most mighty and glorious God, who killest, and makest aliue; bringest down to the graue, and raisest vp; who makest poore, and makest rich; bringest low, and liftest vp; I poore, vile, miserable, and wretched creature, doe heere prostrate my selfe at the footstool of thy Throne of Grace, humbly acknowledging, and from the bottome of mine heart confessing my manifold sinnes, and grieuous iniquities, whereby I haue
procured

1. Sam. 2.
6, 7.

^k La. 3. 22.

procured thy wrath; and haue deserued that all thy dreadfull iudgements should bee powred forth vpon mee: yea, Lord, I confesse that it is thy mercy that I haue not been long agoe confounded. Thy corrections of me haue beene milde and gentle, and thy chastisements full of loue, withdrawing onely some portion of these outward meanes, but not thy louing fauour & countenance from me. I acknowledge, Lord, that I am vnworthy of the least of thy blessings, and most worthy to bee left destitute of all means of maintenance, by reason of the multitude of my manifold transgressions; yet, Lord, I beseech thee, turne vnto mee, and haue mercy vpon me, for
I am

I am desolate and afflicted ;
looke vpon my pouerty , and
my neede, and of thy goodnes
succour mee. Take away thy
rod from me, if it be thy bles-
sed will , and raise vp meanes
of maintenance vnto mee,
whereby I may walke in my
Vocation more cheerefully ,
and may be the better enabled
to glorifie thee. Giue and con-
tinue vnto mee strength to la-
bour , and blesse thou the
worke of mine hands vnto
mee , that I may not bee a
burden vnto others, but may
haue of mine owne, where-
with to sustaine both me and
mine. Neuerthelesse, if it bee
thy will to continue this rod
of Pouerty vpon me , and to
lay the yoke of neede vpon
my necke, Lord, assist me with
thy

¹Psal. 25.
16, 17, 18.

m Iob 9. 34

Phil. 4. 7.

2. Cor 6.

4. 10. d.

P Deut. 8. 3

Mat. 4. 4.

Luk. 12.

15.

thy grace, that I may willingly, and cheerefully beare the yoke. Teach me, O Lord, in whatsoeuer estate I am, therewith to be content; and grant that in all things I may approue my selfe thy seruant in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses; as hauing nothing, yet possessing all things. Giue mee grace to consider with my selfe, that man liueth not by bread only, but by euery word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, and that mans life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which hee possesseth. Open mine eyes, that I may haue an eye as well vpon those things, which through thy mercie I doe enioy, as on what I want. Let me not measure

sure

sure thy fauour by these outward meanes; nor be discouraged at mine owne meanes. Keep my heart from coueting, my tongue from murmuring and repining, my hands from vsing vnlawfull meanes for my reliefe. Keepe mee from diffidence, and distrust in thy prouidence; from confidence in my selfe, from carking cares, feares, sorrowes and all other temptations, which by reason of my pouerty, the Diuell, Flesh, or World, may suggest vnto me. Keepe mee from enuying at others prosperitie, and repining at mine owne misery. Let not mine owne idlenesse, vnthriftnesse, or sinfull courses, prolong this my pouertie. Giue me grace to consider what great riches God-

1. Tim. 6.
6.

Godlinesse is with Contentation : and seeing there can bee no contentment without pic- tie; O Lord, grant that how poore soeuer I am in the world, yet I may bee rich to- wards thee. Let this bodily pouertie, leade me to true spi- rituall pouertie that I may make a good vse of my wants, and distresses, and considering them as thy hand vpon mee, may thereby bee brought to a view of my sinnes, and to a true repentance of the same.

Giue mee an humble heart, and a contrite Spirit. Teach mee to lay aside all car- king care, and to remember thy sweet and comfortable promises; that nothing shall be wanting which is good to them that feare thee; that if we
delight

delight in thee, thou wilt giue
vs our hearts desire; that thou
wilt be a Sunne, and shield, and
giue grace, and glory, and
withhold no good thing from
them that walke vprightly.
Teach mee to rely vpon thy
prouidence, to assure my selfe
that nothing hapneth to mee
without thine appointment,
that thou art able to helpe me,
knowest thou whereof I haue
need, and carest for me. Giue
me grace first and principally
to seeke thy Kingdome, and
thy righteousnes, assuring my
selfe, that then all these earthly
necessaries shall bee supplied
vnto me; Lord, make me rich
in Faith, how poore soeuer I
am in bodily estate, and how-
soeuer I faile of this earthly
portion, with the men of this
world,

^f Psal. 34.
9, 10.
Psal. 37. 4.
Psal. 34. 11

^e Ps. 55. 22.
1. Pet. 5. 7.

^u Mat. 6. 33

^x Iam. 2. 5.

7 Psal. 16.
II.

world, yet I may obtaine that
euerlasting portion with thy
children in the world to
come, to be an heire of thy
Kingdom, & to liue with thee
in heauen: In whose presence
is fulnesse of ioy, and at whose
right hand are pleasures for
euermore. Grant this, O
heauenly Father, for Iesus
Christ his sake, my blessed Sa-
uior: To whom with thee and
the holy Ghost, bee all ho-
nour & glory, now and
for euer. *Amen.*

FINIS.

